A LOVECRAFTIAN/HEAVY METAL TALE BY RUSSELL JACKSON

WHEN TRAPPED IN A TWISTED LABYRINTH OF GHOULISH, SCREAMING NIGHTMARE, THERE'S ALWAYS TIME TO CONSULT YOUR LITTLE BOOK OF BLASPHEMOUS HORRORS™! NOW, WHERE DID I PUT THAT STUPID THING?

THANKS GO OUT FIRST AND FOREMOST TO MY WIFE KASEY, FOR HER LOVE, SUPPORT AND SACRIFICE OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS OF THIS ENDEAVOR. NEITHER THIS PROJECT NOR ANYTHING ELSE THAT HAS COME OF IT, FROM THE CONVENTIONS TO THE COMMISSIONS, WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT HER.

THANKS TO MY PARENTS, GLENN AND SUSAN JACKSON, FOR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF EVERY KIND OVER THE YEARS, AND TO MY BROTHER WILL JACKSON FOR BEING INTO COMICS WITH ME AS KIDS, AND THEN HELPING ME BACK INTO THEM AS ADULTS.

THANKS TO STEVE VESSELL AND THE LOUIVILLE GORE CLUB FOR UNENDING SUPPORT, INCLUDING HOSTING RELEASE PARTIES AND THE PLEDGE-RAISER FOR THIS BOOK. THANKS TO MONSTERS & METAL, PAGE4YETI, RETURN OF THE LIVING PODCAST, AND THE NIGHT MOVES RADIO FOR HAVING ME ON THEIR RESPECTIVE PODCASTS. THANKS ALSO GO TO AMANDA SHEPHERD FOR BEING A FRIEND AND ART-COMPANION TO ME DURING CRAWLING CHAOS' EARLY DAYS, AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTING A STUNNING ILLUSTRATION.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES, WHO HAVE STOCKED CRAWLING CHAOS, PROVIDED SUPPLIES OR HANDED OUT FLYERS: THE GREAT ESCAPE, THE ZONE COMIC SHOP, THE DESTINATION, SINK OR SWIM ART GALLERY, PRESTON ARTS CENTER, PEARL STREET GAME & COFFEE HOUSE, TCB COMICS & TOYS, ARTIST & CRAFTSMAN SUPPLY CO, AND ULTRA-POP. A MUCH-OVERDUE THANKS ALSO TO ANTHONY GRECH III AT GREKO PRINTING/COMIX WELLSPRING FOR BEING ACCOMMODATING TO A FRANTIC NEW ARTIST DURING THE TUMULTUOUS DAYS OF ISSUE 1.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING CONS/EVENTS AND THEIR ORGANIZERS FOR ALLOWING ME TO SET UP SHOP: DERBY CITY COMIC CON, OC3, GEEK GALAXY COMIC CON, CAVALCADE OF COMICS, LEXINGTON COMIC & TOY EXPO, DANCON, A COLD 40, LOUIS-VILLAINZ MARKET 4 MISCHIEF, CONATRON, CINCY COMIC CON, 7TH STREET HAUNT & THE MONSTER BASH, FRIGHT NIGHT HORROR WEEKEND, THE DARK MARKET, DAYS OF THE DEAD, DARK HISTORY & HORROR CON, SCAREFEST, TRICON, SOUTHEND SUMMER SHINDIG, HALFWAY THROUGH HELL, METAL UP YOUR EYE, BLACK CIRCLE BREWERY, KUMA'S CORNER AND THE HEAVY METAL VINYL SWAP MEET, AND AUDITORY CARNAGE DEATH METAL FESTIVAL.

FINALLY, HERE'S A BIG OL' LIST OF WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED ME OR THE COMIC IN OTHER WAYS, OR WITHOUT WHOM I FEEL MY LIFE WOULD BE IMMEASURABLY STINKIER: PATRICK LANKERT, EMILEE LINDERS, LIV LINDERS, DONOVAN DIEBOLD, CHARLEEN BRINSON, CULLEN PITTMAN, TIM WOOD, SARAH BRENNER, JEREMY KING, JASON DAVIS, ALICE WOODS, APRIL MURPHY, LAUREN MURRELL, RYAN & BRIDGET CASE, ALEXANDRA & RYAN RUMSEY, DYER KEATHLEY, LEVI CRANDALL, JEFF & STACEY GAITHER, APRIL HACK, STEVEN ROBERTSON, JOSH SHELTON, ATHENA PRYCHODKO, DAWN SPYKER, ABIGAIL RICHMER, MATTHEW CHRISTENSEN, GUINIVERE LIDDELL, PAT & CHRISTOFER FLANARY (HOPE YOU HAD FUN WATCHING OUKRANOS, DUDE!), KENDRA TETZLAFF & LENNY RUTLEDGE, AMANDA "SHYAMA" GARION & THE STYGIAN SISTERS, ISABEL POLING, ERICA THOMASSON, DICK STARR, NATHAN THOMAS MILLINER, JOE PARRISH, MELISSA NOSEWORTHY, JOHN "JAR" RODRIGUEZ, MICHAEL FOSTER, JOEY PAN, JULZ & HATCHET, MIRANDA WATSON, CHARLIE ZACHERL, BRAXTON GAITHER, JAMES LEDONNE, KATIE HAFLING, JEROME KUNKEL, AMBER KANTES, DAMIAN THORN, NOT RIKTOR, ATTICUS MOORE, LISA FRYE, AMANDA PIERCEY, K. MICHAEL RUSSELL, MEGAN, JOSH AND THE WALLACE FAMILY, AND ANYONE AND EVERYONE ELSE WHOM I HAVE SO TRAGICALLY AND FOOLISHLY FORGOTTEN TO CREDIT, BEEF-WITTED POPPINJAY THAT I AM.

CRAWLING CHAOS, VOLUME ONE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORIES OF:

WARREL DANE
1961 - 2017

KEVLEN "THE ILLEST-STRATOR" GOODNER
1971 - 2019

DANIELA SIMKINS
1987 - 2017

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KICKSTARTER BACKERS

JEREMY D KING
ALEX KEOWN
THE CREATIVE FUND
ERICA THOMASSON
ATTICUS & KATIE
DERICK VOLLMER
LIV LINDERS
JAMES F LEDONNE
PATRICK M LANKERT
CHRIS BASLER
JULIE FAULDS
ANONYMOUS
AMANDA "SHYAMA" GARION
NICHOLE GREGORY
METISA LAUAGO
STEVEN ROBERTSON
TROY DAVIS
AMANDA PIERCEY
ALLIE DOUGLASS
ANDREW RUSSELL BIRKETT
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CHARLIE ZACHERL
THOMAS AND MELISSA OLGES

MAAK PEATASAN
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HYPERTOAST
ANTHONY TATE
TIM WOOD
ANONYMOUS
VI VILLIER
JAYCE WRAYLEY

INTRODUCTION

SEVEN YEARS AGO, I HAD ONE JOB FOR MY UPCOMING WEDDING: TO PLAN A HONEYMOON. IT WASN'T GOING TO BE ANYTHING FANCY; WE DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO GO ANYWHERE EXOTIC, NOR TO STAY AWAY FOR VERY LONG. I HAD HEARD OF BROWN COUNTY, INDIANA, ABOUT AN HOUR'S DRIVE AWAY FROM LOUISVILLE, AND BOOKED A CABIN IN THE STATE PARK THERE. I DID NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE PLACE, SO I HAD NO IDEA IF THE HONEYMOON I HAD PLANNED WAS GOING TO TURN OUT A DISASTER. I KNEW IT WAS WITHIN MY MEANS, SO I TOOK THE RISK.

ON THE NIGHT OF OUR WEDDING, MY NEW WIFE, KASEY, AND I RELAXED IN THE CABIN, HAVING DRIVEN UP IN THE DARK FOLLOWING OUR CEREMONY AND RECEPTION. IT WAS HERE, HIDDEN AWAY FROM THE WORLD, THAT I FIRST SHARED MY IDEA FOR CRAWLING CHAOS WITH ANOTHER PERSON. I SHOWED HER THE ROUGH EARLY SKETCHES I HAD MADE OF H. P. LOVECRAFT'S WILY AND WICKED NYARLATHOTEP, AND OF MY ORIGINAL CREATION, DEATH METAL SINGER LUCY LEFANU. I TOLD HER OF THE ENDLESS IDEAS THAT HAD SWUM IN MY BRAIN SINCE THE STORY'S NEBULOUS CONCEPTION OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR OR SO. I TOLD HER I WANTED TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE COMIC BOOKS, AND THAT CRAWLING CHAOS WOULD BE THE WAY I WOULD TEACH MYSELF. SHE LOVED THE IDEA, LAUGHING OVER THE WEIRD INTERPRETATION OF NYARLATHOTEP ("NYARLY" AS I CALLED HIM), AND ENCOURAGED ME TO GO FOR IT.

I'VE HEARD A LOT OF CREATIVE TYPES STATE THAT IF THEY TELL SOMEONE WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON, IT KILLS THE "MAGIC." I HAD THOUGHT ABOUT ADOPTING THIS APPROACH, UNTIL I REALIZED IT CAME FROM A PLACE OF FEAR. FEAR OF FAILURE... AND OF PEOPLE KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE FAILED. I FELT THAT FEAR, AND HATED IT. I DECIDED I COULD EITHER LET IT RULE ME, OR MAKE IT WORK FOR ME.

SO, I TOLD EVERYONE.

EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHOM I REGULARLY ENCOUNTERED IN MY DAY-TO-DAY LIFE, I TOLD I WAS MAKING A COMIC BOOK. IF I WAS GOING TO BE AFRAID OF FAILURE, THEN I WAS GOING TO MAKE DAMN SURE THAT THE FAILURE I WAS AFRAID OF WOULD BE SO COLOSSAL AND FAR-REACHING THAT I WOULD ENGAGE EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY I POSSESSED TO AVOID IT. IF I DIDN'T FINISH THIS BOOK, EVERYONE IN MY LIFE WOULD KNOW IT.

I COMPLETED THE INTERIOR ARTWORK ON CRAWLING CHAOS #1 IN THREE MONTHS DURING THE SUMMER OF 2013 – STILL THE MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME OF MY ARTISTIC LIFE. EVERY ISSUE SINCE HAS TAKEN INCREASINGLY LONGER. BUT, THEY'VE ALSO GOTTEN MORE ARTISTICALLY AND NARRATIVELY SOPHISTICATED EACH TIME. MY MISSION WITH CRAWLING CHAOS HAS BEEN TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROCESS OF MAKING COMICS BOOKS, AND I LIKE TO THINK I LEARNED A LOT VERY QUICKLY – MAYBE TOO QUICKLY. YOU'LL SEE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY SKILL AS YOU READ THIS – FROM THE HASTY, CARTOONISH ART OF THE FIRST ISSUE TO THE TIGHTER, EXPRESSIVE LINES OF THE FIFTH; FROM THE FRANTIC, OBSCENITY-LADEN DIALOGUE OF THE FIRST ISSUE TO THE FRIGHTFUL WHISPERS OF AN ANCIENT, DEPOSED GOD IN THE FIFTH; FROM THE CRAMPED COMPOSITIONS OF THE FIRST, TO THE ROOMIER PAGES OF #5.

ALONG THE WAY, CRAWLING CHAOS TOOK ME TO NEW PLACES AT EVERY TURN. I STARTED ATTENDING THE LOUISVILLE GORE CLUB, WHO HOSTED RELEASE PARTIES FOR MY FIRST THREE ISSUES AND WHOSE MEMBERS FORMED MY FIRST FANBASE. I BEGAN SELLING MY STUFF AT CONVENTIONS IN 2014 AT DERBY CITY COMIC CON (RIP), AND BEGAN MEETING OTHER CREATORS IN THE REGIONAL COMIC/ART SCENE, BEFRIENDING A FEW AND LEARNING FROM ALL. I ADDED SMALLER LOCAL EVENTS IN 2015 WITH A COLD 40 AND THE FLEDGLING MARKET FOR MISCHIEF, AND DID MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MY OLD FRIENDS AT RETURN OF THE LIVING PODCAST. I'VE BEEN PLACES I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GO, TAKEN COMMISSIONS AND GOTTEN JOBS I NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET, AND MET PEOPLE I DEFINITELY NEVER WOULD HAVE MET IF NOT FOR THIS COMIC.

THE MORNING AFTER OUR WEDDING, MY WIFE AND I EXITED OUR CABIN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE ARRIVING. AS I SAID ABOVE, WE HAD ARRIVED WELL AFTER NIGHTFALL, AND SO WE HADN'T A CLUE WHAT OUR SURROUNDINGS LOOKED LIKE. I WAS STILL ANXIOUS ABOUT THE TRIP AS A WHOLE, NOT KNOWING WHETHER WE WOULD FIND ANYTHING APPEALING TO US IN THIS STRANGE RUSTIC MYSTERY OF A PLACE. AS FAR AS I KNEW, WE COULD BE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON THE BIGGEST BOMB OF A HONEYMOON IN WORLD HISTORY.

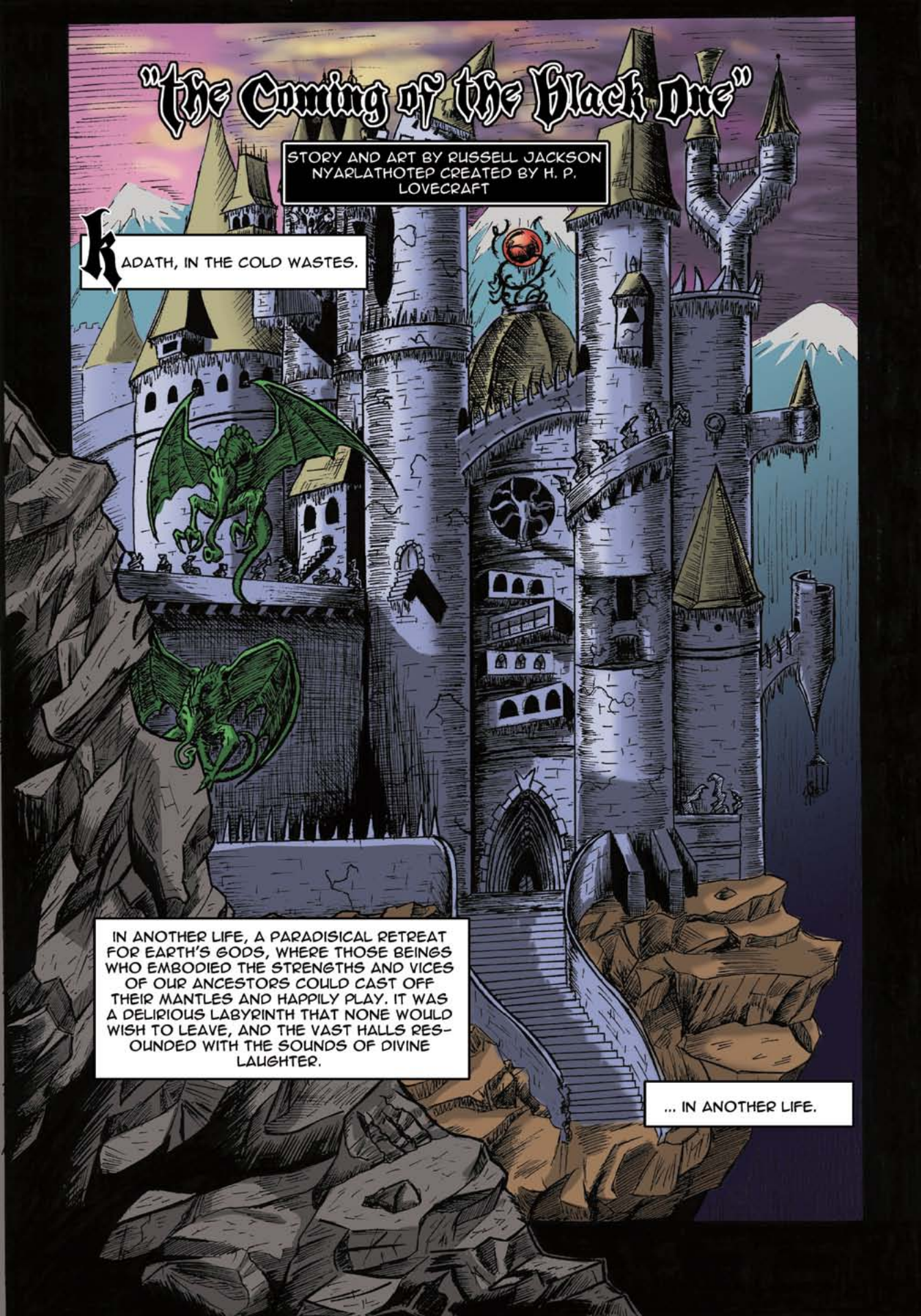
WHEN KASEY OPENED THE DOOR ONTO THE TINY FRONT PORCH OF THE CABIN THAT MORNING, SHE GASPED, AND STOOD STILL. I CAME UP BEHIND HER TO SEE WHAT HAD MADE HER FREEZE LIKE THAT, AND WAS SOON DUMBSTRUCK MYSELF. ALL AROUND US, THE FOREST CANOPY SHONE WITH THE MOST BRILLIANT GOLD LEAVES I HAVE EVER SEEN. STANDING BEHIND HER, WATCHING HER REACTION AT THE SCENE TO WHICH WE HAD AWAKENED, I KNEW THAT, EVEN IF THE REST OF THE TRIP WASN'T SO GREAT, I HAD SUCCEEDED IN GIVING US BOTH AT LEAST ONE MEMORY WE WOULD NEVER FORGET. MY RISK HAD PAID OFF.

LOOKING BACK NOW, AT EVERYTHING I'VE ACCOMPLISHED WITH CRAWLING CHAOS, EVERYTHING IT'S TAUGHT ME, ALL THE WAYS IT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE, ALL THE NEW FRIENDS AND READERS I HAVE MADE BECAUSE OF THIS OVERLY-AMBITIOUS LITTLE INDIE COMIC BOOK, I HAVE SOMETHING APPROACHING THE SAME FEELING. IT HASN'T MADE ME RICH OR FAMOUS, IT'S EATEN UP TIME, MONEY, RESOURCES, BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS, BUT THE RISK I STARTED TAKING ON THAT VERY SAME NIGHT SEVEN YEARS AGO HAS MOST DEFINITELY PAID OFF.

HORNS UP, AND I'A AZATHOTH.

-RUSSELL

#1


"The Coming of the Black One"
STORY AND ART BY RUSSELL JACKSON
NYARLATHOTEP CREATED BY H. P. LOVECRAFT
KADATH, IN THE COLD WASTES.
IN ANOTHER LIFE, A PARADISICAL RETREAT FOR EARTH'S GODS, WHERE THOSE BEINGS WHO EMBODIED THE STRENGTHS AND VICES OF OUR ANCESTORS COULD CAST OFF THEIR MANTLES AND HAPPILY PLAY. IT WAS A DELIRIOUS LABYRINTH THAT NONE WOULD WISH TO LEAVE, AND THE VAST HALLS RESOUNDED WITH THE SOUNDS OF DIVINE LAUGHTER.
... IN ANOTHER LIFE.

YET ALL LIVES MUST END.
KADATH, IN ITS CURRENT INCARNATION, STANDS FORSAKEN BY THE GODS WHO SANG AND DANCED HERE.
TODAY, A DIFFERENT TENANT SITS UPON THE THRONE.
IT IS A TENANT WELL-DISPOSED TO COMPREHEND THE FALL OF THE GODS FROM KADATH, AND WHAT CAUSED IT.
THE RAVAGES OF TIME AND ENTROPY.
IT HAS BEEN HIS PURPOSE TO UNDERSTAND THESE CAUSES SINCE HIS BIRTH AT THE GENESIS OF THE COSMOS.
HE IS THEIR EMISSARY.

THE HERALD OF NIGHT AND MADNESS; THE MESSENGER AND SOUL OF THE OUTER GODS...
AT LAST, AFTER TWO-AND-A-HALF HUNDRED YEARS, I HAVE COME HOME.
NOW...
I CAN FINALLY REST.
BWOOOOOONG
GAAAHH!!
AN EMISSARY FROM THE MASTER OF CHAOS!
CHAOS; IT DESTROYS ALL ORDERED SYSTEMS. IT UNSEATS ALL LORDS.
SINCE HIS BIRTH, HE HAS BEEN ITS BLOODY CHAMPION.
BUT NOW...
RISE.
MY LORD NYARLATHOTEP! I BEAR A REQUEST FROM THE BLIND IDIOT GOD, THE FATHER OF MADNESS, THE DAEMON-SULTAN WHO SITS ON THE THRONE OF CHAOS AT -
ENOUGH FORMALITY. I KNOW WHO YOU SERVE. I ASSUME HE WISHES TO SEE ME?
...YES, YOUR MADNESS.

AS USUAL, HIS TIMING IS FUCKING PERFECT.
CAN'T SIT ON THE THRONE A SINGLE FUCKING MINUTE AFTER GETTING OFF A 250-YEAR HIKE WITHOUT GETTING SUMMONED BY THAT COSMIC BLOWHARD...
HIGHER CLIMBED THE WEIRD BEINGS INTO THE VOID, WHERE THE FATHER OF ALL CHAOS AND MADNESS WAITED, A PLACE GLIMPSED ONLY BY HUMAN EYES WHICH EVER AFTER STARED INTO A NOTHINGNESS THEIR MORE SANE FELLOWS COULD NOT COMPREHEND...
SO EXACTLY HOW FAR UP THIS DUMB STAR-ROAD DID YOU PARK YOUR TESSERACT, ANYWAY?
AFTER FURTHER BICKERING...
I MAY BE BILLIONSOF YEARS OLD, BUT, I STILL FEEL LIKE I GOT CHEATED OUT OF THE LAST TWO HOURS
MY LORD AZATHOTH, MY I PRESENT THE CRAWLING CHAOS, THE HERALD OF –
YEAH, YEAH, SKIP IT. I'M TOO CRANKY FOR THIS. WHAT DO YOU WANT, AZATHOTH?
I reClaim KaDath.
ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?!?!?!

You have heard me, black one. My patronAge is at an end. Nyarlathotep is lord of Kadath no morE.
WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING AND WHERE DID YOU FIND A PIPE BIG ENOUGH? I JUST GOT BACK FROM 250 YEARS WANDERING EARTH, AND NOW YOU KICK ME OUT OF MY HOME? DARE I ASK WHY?!
You lost the Saurian time-piece. So too must you lose Kadath. I can No long-er TruSt yOu.
CAN'T TRUST ME? UNPREDICTABLE? THIS COMING FROM THE EMBODIMENT OF CHAOS? WHAT KIND OF LOGIC IS THAT?!!
It is SOUND logic.
EXACTLY! YOU NEVER USED THAT SHIT BEFORE! WHAT'S HAPPENING??!!?
Be Gone, Crawling Chaos.
WHOA!!!
FUUUCK YOOOU ASSHOOOOOOLE!!!
ALL LIVES MUST END.

FLOP FLOP FLOP
FLOP FLOP FLOP
THIS IS GONNA SUCK.
CLING
CRASH!!!

HOLY SHIT!!!
UUUUGHHH...
OH, FUCK ME. NOT AGAIN.
DAMN IT DAMN IT DAMN IT...
SKREEEEEE!!!
LATE AGAIN. THE PROF IS GOING TO HAVE MY ASS...
WELL, ONE OF US WILL BE HAPPY...

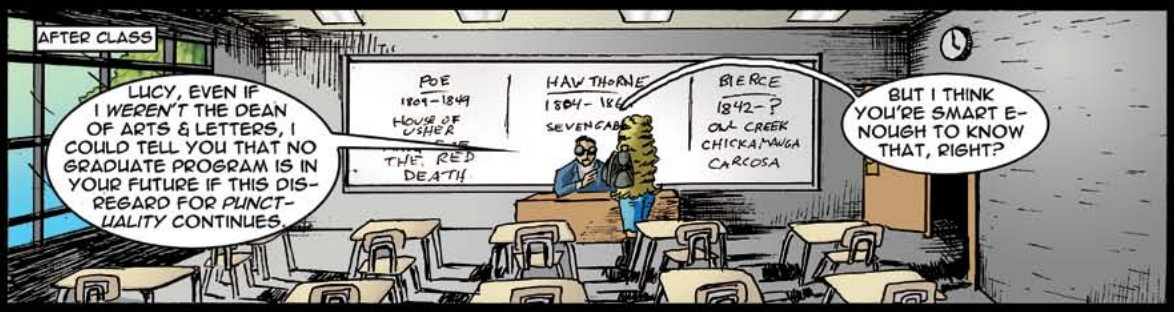
NO MUSIC? WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING LAST NIGHT?
YESTERDAY... OH, YEAH. ARGUED WITH MIKE ABOUT LYRICS. I WAS PROBABLY TOO FRUSTRATED TO LISTEN TO SOMEONE ELSE'S *SUCCESSFUL* WRITING.

OKAY, *TESTAMENT* OR *OVERKILL?* TALK ABOUT A TOUGH CALL.
FUCK IT, OVERKILL! I ALMOST PUT MY *EYE* OUT ON BLITZ'S *MIDDLE FINGER* WHILE CROWDSURFING ONCE. THAT'S BASICALLY FRIENDSHIP!
SHIT! I FUCKING DROPPED IT!!!

GET OFF THE FUCKING ROAD, MORON!
HONK!
AHA! WHOOP, NEVERMIND!
WATCH IT, YOU PSYCHO BITCH!
AL-MOST...
HONK!
C'MERE, YOU LITTLE BASTARD...
MOMMY!
GOTCHA! INTO THE STEREO YA GO!

YES! FINALLY, SOME *SANITY!*

AL-MOST THERE!
CLICK
OBOY.
UM, HI EVERYONE.
SORRY.
WELL, GOOD MORNING, LUCY! HAVE YOU RUSHED IN HERE TO WARN US THAT THE BUILDING IS ON FIRE...
333
HMM. WELL, NO STORE WOULD SELL ME LIGHTER FLUID BY THE CASE...
...OR ARE YOU SIMPLY LATE TO CLASS, AGAIN?!
SO, I GUESS I'M LATE.
CARRY ON.

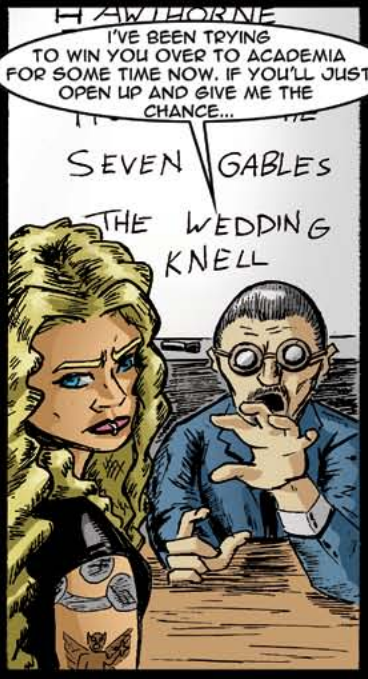

AFTER CLASS
LUCY, EVEN IF I WEREN'T THE DEAN OF ARTS & LETTERS, I COULD TELL YOU THAT NO GRADUATE PROGRAM IS IN YOUR FUTURE IF THIS DISREGARD FOR PUNCTUALITY CONTINUES.
POE 1809-1849 HOUSE OF USHER THE RED DEATH
HAWTHORNE 1804-18 SEVEN GABLES
BIERCE 1842-? OWL CREEK CHICKAMAUGA CARCOSA
BUT I THINK YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

I'M NOT SURE, DR. PHELPS. EVIDENTLY I'M NOT SMART ENOUGH TO GET TO CLASS ON TIME THE MORNING AFTER BAND PRACTICE.

LUCY, YOU'RE YOUNG. AND TRULY PASSIONATE YOUNG PEOPLE OFTEN TRY TO DO EVERYTHING THEIR HEARTS DESIRE. BUT EVENTUALLY - AND I SEE YOU'RE REALIZING THIS - YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT SOME THINGS ASIDE FOR THE SAKE OF ADULTHOOD AND SANITY. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

... YOU'RE SAYING ADULTHOOD IS ABOUT GIVING UP ON DREAMS?

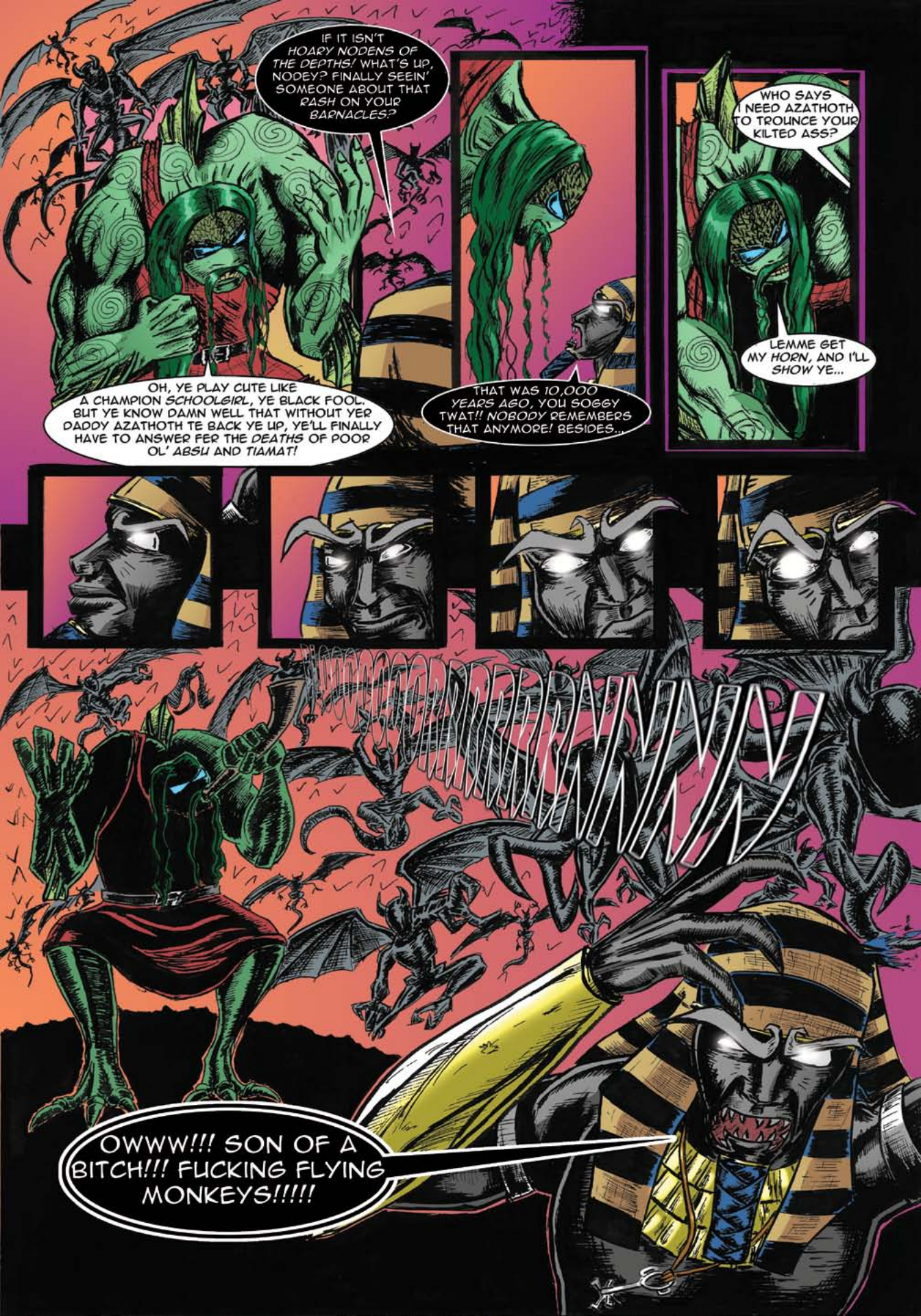
NO, SWEETHEART; I'M SAYING YOU SHOULD PICK ONE DREAM AND STICK WITH IT. AND I THINK WE BOTH KNOW THAT A COLLEGE CAREER IS MORE REALISTIC THAN THE BAND.

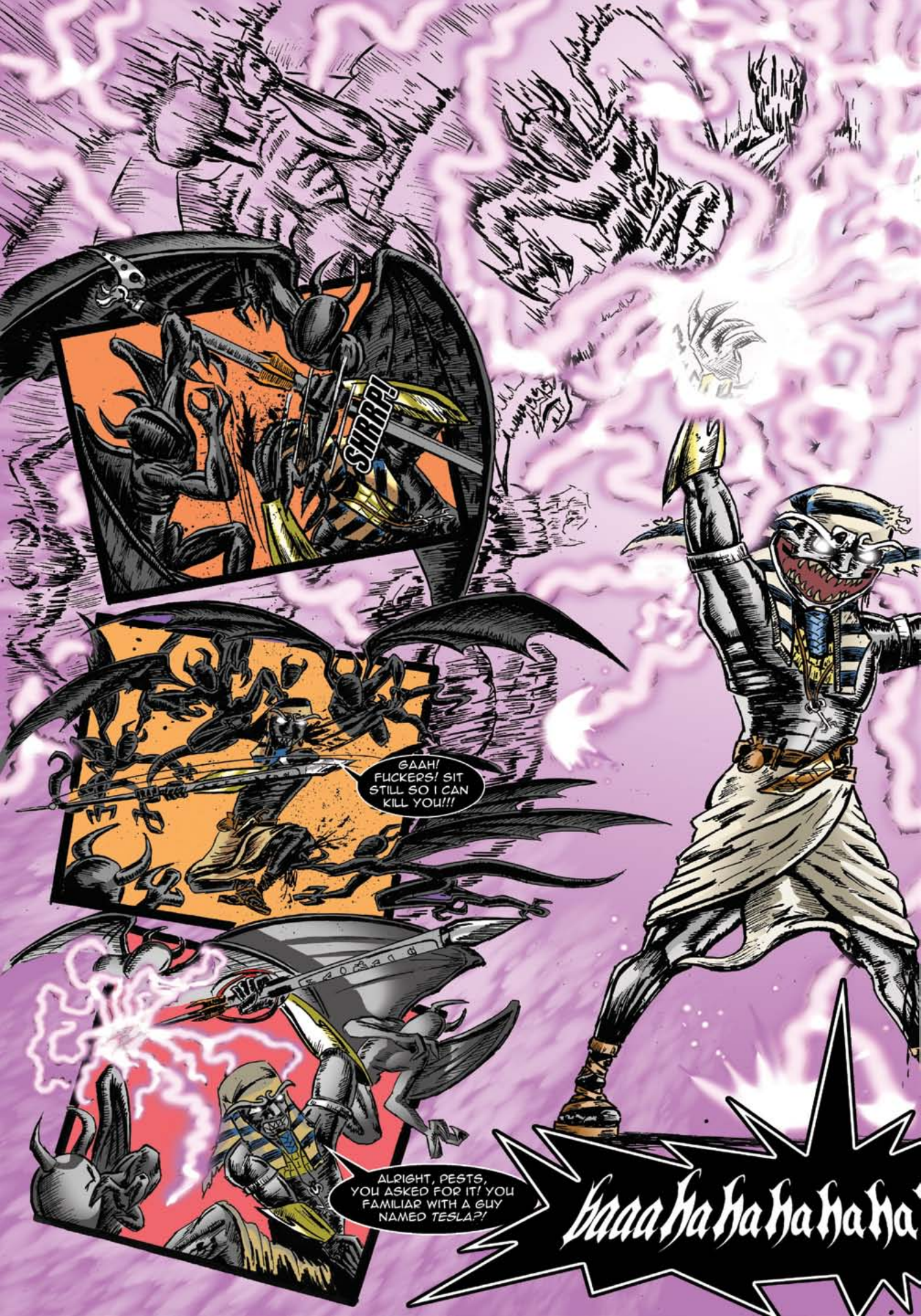

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO WIN YOU OVER TO ACADEMIA FOR SOME TIME NOW. IF YOU'LL JUST OPEN UP AND GIVE ME THE CHANCE...
SEVEN GABLES
THE WEDDING KNELL

I THINK YOU'LL SEE IT'S THE FAR MORE REWARDING OPTION.

POE
(1809-1849)
-HOUSE OF USHER
-MASQUE OF THE RED DEA
DON'T CALL ME 'SWEETHEART', DR. PHELPS.
I'VE GOTTA GO.
THINK ABOUT WHAT I SAID, PLEASE, LUCY!
THINK ABOUT *FUCKING OFF*, CREEP. I'VE GOT A STUPID, CHILDISH DREAM TO CHASE.
POE

THE PLATEAU OF LENG.
WELL, THAT WAS UNCOMFORTABLE. HOW LONG DID I FALL? TEN DAYS, ELEVEN? LUCIFER WAS SUCH A CRYBABY.
I SURE UNDERSTAND HIS WHOLE BEING-FIRED-BY-YOUR-DAD GRIPE NOW, THOUGH.
AH WELL, NO USE WRITING A BIG DUMB POEM ABOUT IT. I'VE GOTTA FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS DUMP.
JUST GOTTA FIND SOME LANDMARKS...
...CRIPES.
MAYBE I CAN FIND A GROUP OF THOSE BUTT-UGLY SATYR FREAKS! THOSE IDIOTS PRACTICALLY WORSHIP ME!
I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE AND FIND A NEW PATRON BEFORE WORD SPREADS THAT AZATHOTH ISN'T BACKING ME ANYMO-
WHAM
-RE?!
NYARLATHOTEP!! I DEMAND WORDS WITH THEE!!!
...RIPOFF...


IF IT ISN'T HOARY NODENS OF THE DEPTHS! WHAT'S UP, NODEY? FINALLY SEEIN' SOMEONE ABOUT THAT RASH ON YOUR BARNACLES?
OH, YE PLAY CUTE LIKE A CHAMPION SCHOOLGIRL, YE BLACK FOOL. BUT YE KNOW DAMN WELL THAT WITHOUT YER DADDY AZATHOTH TE BACK YE UP, YE'LL FINALLY HAVE TO ANSWER FER THE DEATHS OF POOR OL' ABSU AND TIAMAT!
THAT WAS 10,000 YEARS AGO, YOU SOGGY TWAT!! NOBODY REMEMBERS THAT ANYMORE! BESIDES...
WHO SAYS I NEED AZATHOTH TO TROUNCE YOUR KILTED ASS?
LEMME GET MY HORN, AND I'LL SHOW YE...
OWWW!!! SON OF A BITCH!!! FUCKING FLYING MONKEYS!!!!!


SHRRP!
GAAH! FUCKERS! SIT STILL SO I CAN KILL YOU!!!
ALRIGHT, PESTS, YOU ASKED FOR IT! YOU FAMILIAR WITH A GUY NAMED TESLA?!
haaa ha ha ha ha ha

HOW DO YA LIKE THAT? THEY'RE BUGGERING OFF!
HEHE, LOVE BRITISH SLANG... WELL/COUNT-LESS NIGHT-GAUNTS WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS BOOK, THANKS TO MOI!
WELL, HE LEARNED ALL OF HIS SCARIEST STUFF FROM ME!!!
NOW WHERE DID THEIR BIG, DUMB, SALT-WATERY SEA-GOD LEADER GET TO?
...OBOY.
ha haaa!!!!!!

SHIT! WHY DOES THAT KEEP HAPPENING TO ME TODAY?
TINKLE COUGHE TINKLE
READ
WHITE BOOKS
OCCULT LITERATURE
WHO THE HELL IS OUT HERE SLAMMING THAT DOOR? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
CLOSED
GO AWAY
DUDE, THAT THING WEIGHS A TON. IT SLAMS ITSELF!
YOU DON'T FOOL ME, MISSY. I RECOGNIZE YOUR WINE, EVEN WITH THE SIX BOTTLES OF FACE I HAD THIS MORNING.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOES ALL THAT BARKING AND GROWLING ONSTAGE WITH THAT DEATH METAL BAND OF YOURS, THE OAK RIDGE BOYS!!
THAT'S OUKRANOS, ASSHOLE!!!
RUBBISH BOOKS BROWSERS MUST BUY!
WHATEVER. YOU'VE BEEN HERE ENOUGH TO KNOW ABOUT THE DOOR SLAMMING. WE HAVE TO KEEP THIS PLACE QUIET, HEAR? THAT'S RULE #1!!!
WHITE BOOKS RULES
WELL, IT WOULD BE RULE #1, IF I HADN'T HAD THE D.T.'S WHEN I WROTE THAT. THIS IS AN OCCULT BOOKSTORE, NOT ONE OF YOUR HEAVY METAL SHOWS! WE KEEP IT QUIET!!!
HEY, SHUT THE FUCK UP OVER THERE!!!
BAM
BAM

SLAM!
OPEN
JERK! TOO BAD HE'S BASICALLY MY ONLY SOURCE FOR LYRICAL MATERIAL; *WEIRD TALES* ARE GREAT, BUT THEY JUST DON'T SOUND LEGIT ENOUGH WITHOUT SOME *AUTHENTIC OCCULTISM* TO SPICE THEM UP A BIT.
WHITE BOOKS "GET OUT!"

LATER...
HOME AT LAST! GOTTA GET SOME MUSIC ON; THIS SILENCE IS *DEAFENING!*
HEHE... NAPALM DEATH IT IS!

OKAY, LET'S SEE; MESSAGES FROM CASS... OH, GREAT, A VOICEMAIL FROM MIKE. MUST NOT'VE HEARD IT OVER THE MUSIC IN THE CAR...
WHITE BOOKS "GET OUT!"
LET'S SEE IF I CAN DROWN HIM OUT ON *SPEAKERPHONE!*

HEY, LUCY, RICH FROM *SILENT HUNGER RECORDS* CALLED. I THINK HE'S WONDERING IF WE ACTUALLY *HAVE* AN ALBUM TO RELEASE. TO BE HONEST, SO AM I.
FUCK YOU, MIKE.
WE STILL NEED YOUR VOX ON TWO SONGS. I KNOW YOU HAVE SCHOOL, BUT CAN YOU HURRY IT UP ALREADY? HOPE ALL IS WELL.

SHIT, MAN, I THOUGHT BASSISTS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE *EASYGOING.*
"SIGH" HE'S RIGHT, THOUGH. I HAVEN'T HAD A DRY SPELL LIKE THIS IN... WELL, *EVER.* LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT.
THE ENTITIES OF SHADOW, BY DR. KONRAD GEORG SCHMELZ. SOUNDS PROMISING...
HSSP!

"ONE OF THE LESS-ATTESTED (HIC) OF THESE DARK MESSENGER FIGURES LURKS IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE ANC(HIC)ENT EGYPTIAN RELIGION. THE RITUAL FOR SUMMONING THIS ENTITY WAS DIFFICULT TO RECONSTRUCT; IT SEEMS NEVER TO HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED (HIC) TO A SINGLE PERSON, BUT DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS WHICH WERE PASSED DOWN THROUGH SEVERAL (HIC) GENERATIONS, UP TO THE TIME OF THE PHARAOH AKHENATEN, WHEN IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN (HIC) OUTLAWED WITH THE REST OF THE OLD GODS; THIS RITUAL, HOWEVER, WAS *NOT* REVIVED AFTER AKHENATEN.

"URP!" WHERE WAS I? OH, YEAH, THIS BIG LONG PASSAGE HERE:

LATER...

"UPON RECONSTRUCTION, IT BECAME CLEAR WHY THE RITUAL WAS DIVIDED; IT WAS SIMPLE, EASILY (HIC) PERFORMED BY A SINGLE NOVICE; TO THE EGYPTIANS, WHO BELIEVED IN ITS IMMENSE POWER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO (HIC) DANGEROUS FOR ONE PERSON TO POSSESS THE WHOLE OF IT.

"STRANGELY, THIS RITUAL INITIALLY APPEARED TO BE THE FIRST EVER FOUND FOR SUMMONING THE MALEVOLENT (HIC) SERPENT-DEITY KNOWN AS ***APEP***. HOWEVER, FURTHER WORK REVEALED THAT THIS SPELL CONCERNED AN UNNAMED BEING THAT CLEARLY (HIC) EVOKED A POWERFUL FEAR IN THE PRIESTS ENTRUSTED WITH ITS SECRET - EVIDENT EVEN MILLENNIA AFTER THE TEXTS' (HIC) CREATION."

SOUNDS JUICY! (HIC) LET'S SEE... "THIS RITUAL REQUIRES AN OPEN SPACE, WITH MUSIC." CAN DO, KONNY!

"LIBATIONS ARE POURED OUT" - CHECK! - "AND THEN THE FOLLOWING GLYPHS ARE DRAWN, WHILST RECITING THE APPROPRIATE CHANTS, THUSLY:

DAMN IT, KONNY, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO TELL ME I NEED CHALK *BEFORE* I SIT DOWN!

MOVE, RUG! HEHE! *SNORT*

ALRIGHT, MIKE, YOU BASTARD! YOU WANT LYRICS, I'LL GIVE YA LYRICS!

"IAS NAB WAXET, II M HOTEP. IAS NAB WAXET, IAS, IAS, NYA-RLT-HOTEP..."

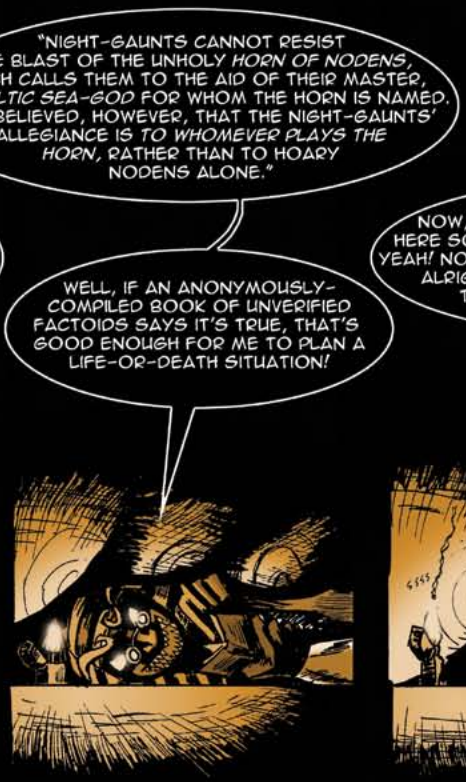
FLICK
FLICK

OH, MAN, WHAT A LANDING!!

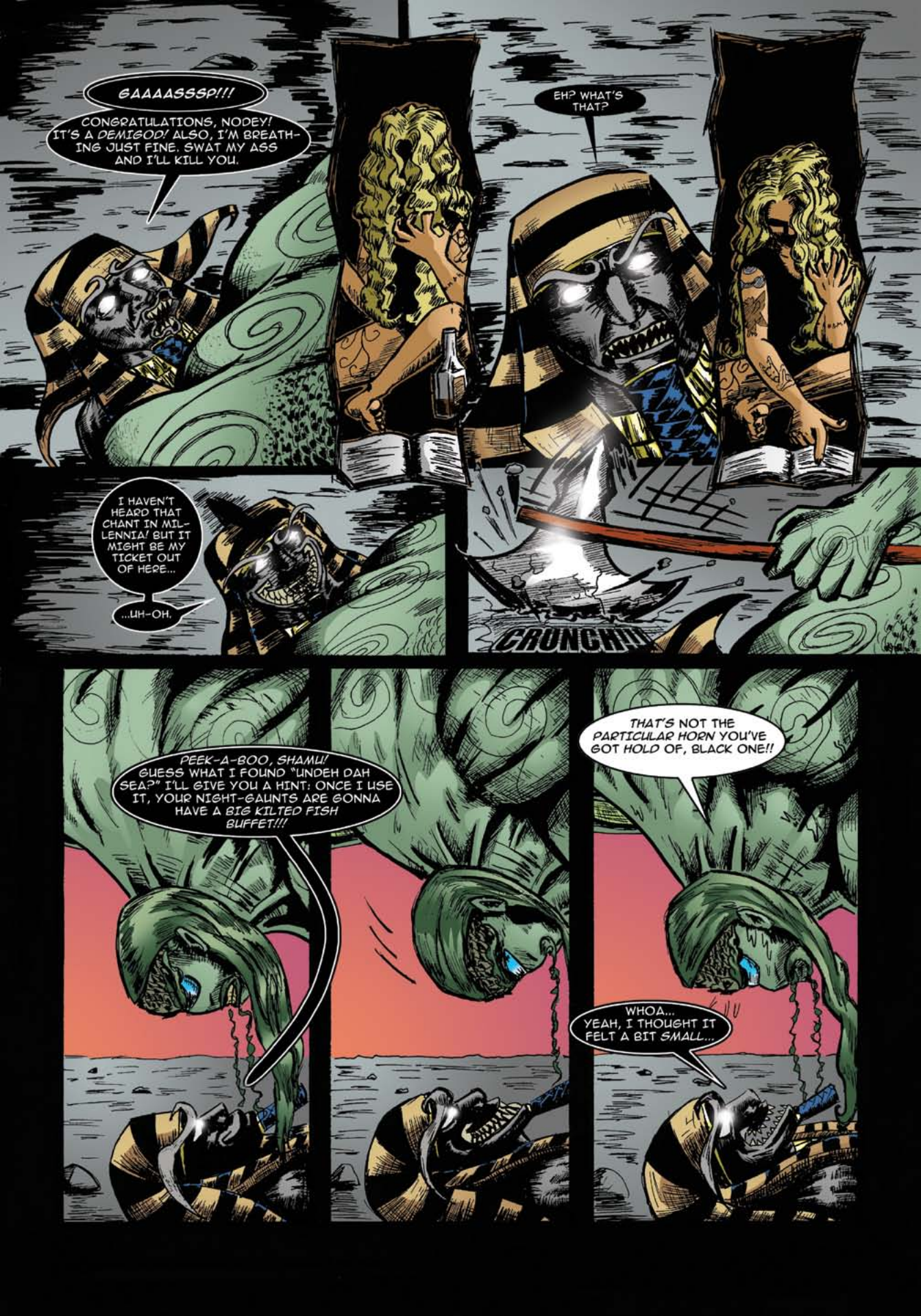
WHAT A WAY TO GO; TRAPPED BETWEEN A *ROCK* AND A *FAT PLACE*. I'VE GOTTA FIGURE A WAY OUT FROM UNDER THIS *FLABBY FISH-FACE* AND PAST HIS HORDE OF *NIGHT-GAUNTS*.
AH-HA! I KNOW WHAT TO DO!

WHEN TRAPPED IN A TWISTED LABYRINTH OF GHOULISH, SCREAMING NIGHTMARE, THERE'S ALWAYS TIME TO CONSULT YOUR *LITTLE BOOK OF BLASPHEMOUS HORRORS™*! NOW, WHERE DID I PUT THAT STUPID THING?

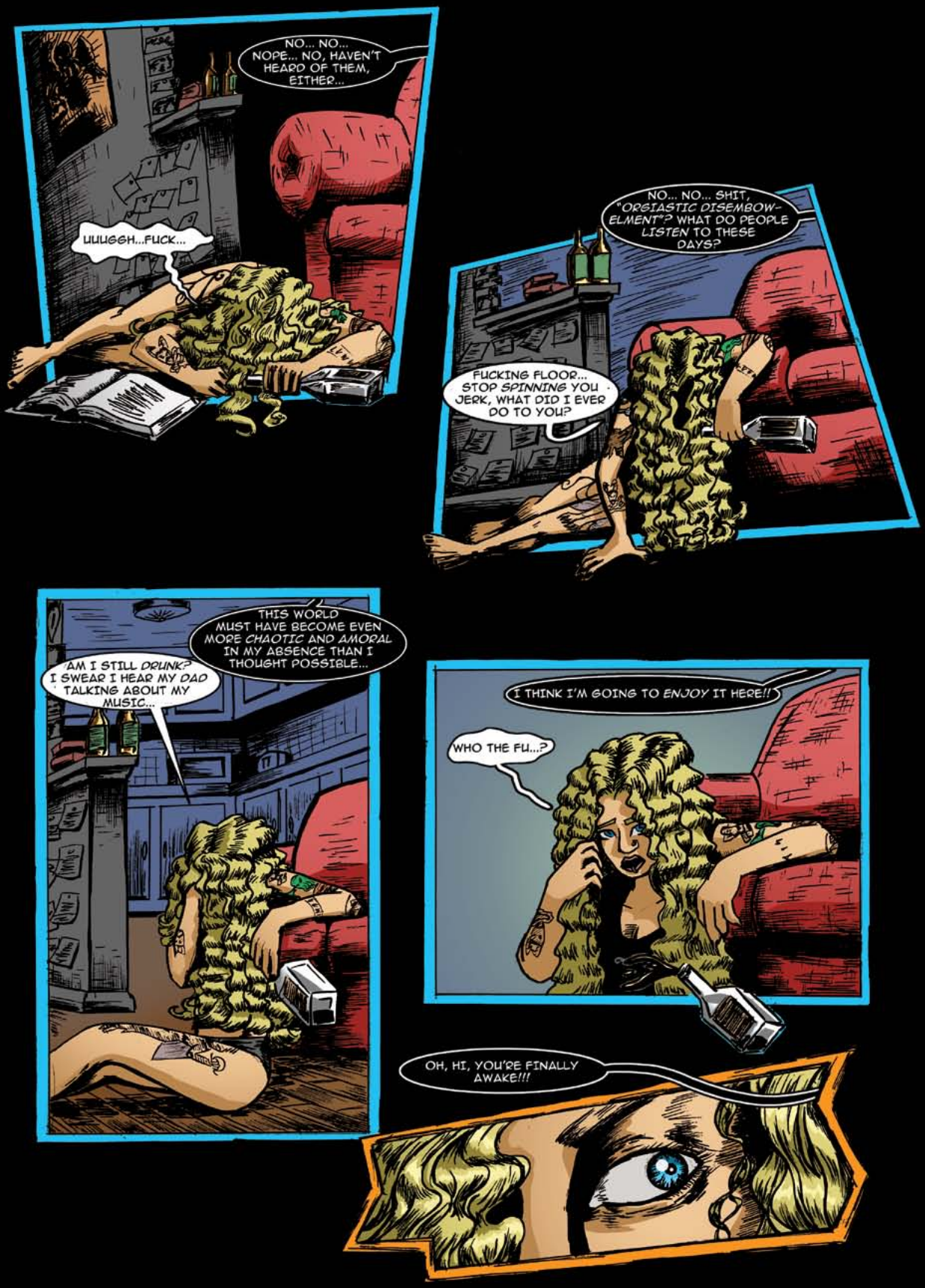
NOW, LET'S SEE: *NARDS OF DOOM*, *NACHTWURST NIGHTMARE PLATTER*... HERE WE ARE! *NIGHT-GAUNTS*!


"NIGHT-GAUNTS CANNOT RESIST THE BLAST OF THE UNHOLY *HORN OF NODENS*, WHICH CALLS THEM TO THE AID OF THEIR MASTER, THE *CELTIC SEA-GOD* FOR WHOM THE HORN IS NAMED. IT IS BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE NIGHT-GAUNTS' ALLEGIANCE IS *TO WHOMEVER PLAYS THE HORN*, RATHER THAN TO HOARY NODENS ALONE."
WELL, IF AN ANONYMOUSLY-COMPILED BOOK OF UNVERIFIED FACTOIDS SAYS IT'S TRUE, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME TO PLAN A LIFE-OR-DEATH SITUATION!

THANKS, LITTLE BOOK! NOW, THAT HORN HAS TO BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE! UGH... NO, NOT THERE... YEAH! NO... YES! NO, DAMN IT... AHA! GOTCHA! ALRIGHT, NODENS, GET READY FOR A TASTE OF YOUR OWN *HORN*!!
...EW.


GAAAASSSP!!!
CONGRATULATIONS, NODEY! IT'S A DEMIGOD! ALSO, I'M BREATHING JUST FINE. SWAT MY ASS AND I'LL KILL YOU.
EH? WHAT'S THAT?
I HAVEN'T HEARD THAT CHANT IN MILLENNIA! BUT IT MIGHT BE MY TICKET OUT OF HERE...
...UH-OH.
CRUNCH!!!
PEEK-A-BOO, SHAMU! GUESS WHAT I FOUND "UNDEH DAH SEA?" I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT: ONCE I USE IT, YOUR NIGHT-GAUNTS ARE GONNA HAVE A BIG KILTED FISH BUFFET!!!
THAT'S NOT THE PARTICULAR HORN YOU'VE GOT HOLD OF, BLACK ONE!!
WHOA... YEAH, I THOUGHT IT FELT A BIT SMALL...

YEEEAAARGGH!!!
...BUT I'LL TAKE IT!
BLOOORAWN
HERE WE GO; HOPE THEY DON'T STILL LIKE THAT BIG MUSTACHIOED MANATEE!
HAHAHAHA, YES! I'LL BE HOLDING ONTO THIS HORN! THESE CRITTERS COULD BE USEFUL!
HELLO, WHAT'S THIS? OFFERING ME A RIDE? YOU'RE TOO KIND!
WEEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEEEE!!!
CENSORED
YEAH, YEAH, I'M COMING, WHOEVER YOU ARE. SAY, FELLA, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
WHA? HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT? NEVER-MIND, I'LL JUST CALL YA STEVE!
WWRRRBBBLLL!
SAYONARA, NODEY! HERE, I DON'T BELIEVE IN CAST-RATING MANATEES!
I'LL HAVE... YOUR HEAD... BLACK... ONE...
CENSORED

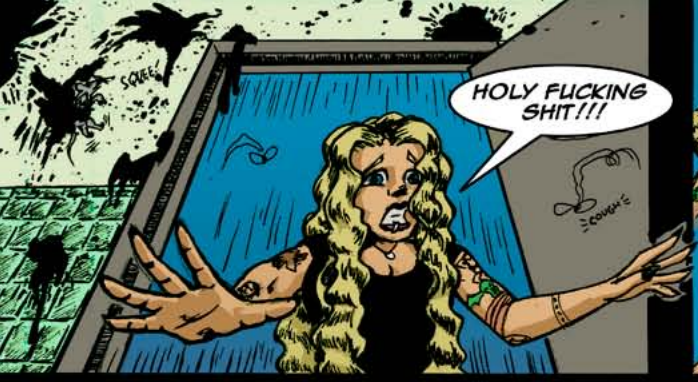

NO... NO... NOPE... NO, HAVEN'T HEARD OF THEM, EITHER...
UUUGGH...FUCK...
NO... NO... SHIT, "ORGIASTIC DISEMBOWELMENT"? WHAT DO PEOPLE LISTEN TO THESE DAYS?
FUCKING FLOOR... STOP SPINNING YOU JERK, WHAT DID I EVER DO TO YOU?
THIS WORLD MUST HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE CHAOTIC AND AMORAL IN MY ABSENCE THAN I THOUGHT POSSIBLE...
AM I STILL DRUNK? I SWEAR I HEAR MY DAD TALKING ABOUT MY MUSIC...
I THINK I'M GOING TO ENJOY IT HERE!!
WHO THE FU...?
OH, HI, YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE!!!

I HAVE HEARD YOUR RITUAL SUMMONS, MY LADY, AND GLADLY ACCEPT YOUR OFFERED HOSPITALITY. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BLIND IDIOT GOD AZATHOTH, YOU ARE NOW MY PATRON, AND I AM AT YOUR SERVICE, AS YOU HAVE SWORN TO SPREAD THE SEEDS OF CHAOS ACROSS THE EARTH, AND WORK TOWARDS MY LIKE AIM OF UNDOING ALL SYSTEMS SET IN PLACE BY SENTIENT BEINGS TO ORDER THE UNIVERSE!!!
COUGH
GAG
AND, IF YOU NEED TO PUKE, USE THE SINK. STEVE HAD TO GO, AND NOW YOUR BATHROOM LOOKS LIKE GENOCIDE.

NYARLATHOTEP, BY AMANDA SHEPHERD

#2

CONGRATULATIONS, MY LADY! YOU ARE NOW MY PATRON! YOUR WILL BE DONE, ETC., ETC., FOR THE MERE PRICE OF CHAOS!
SO, HOW SHALL WE START? YOUR QUARTERS REVEAL YOU AS THE DISORDERLY TYPE; YOU WANT TO TOPPLE GOVERNMENTS, UNSEAT LEADERS, PUT A HUMAN TOE INTO EVERY FIFTH TWINKIE?
W... HUH... WHA?
...AH, THE ELOQUENT TYPE. HOW REFRESHING.
ULP!
?!?
YOU MAY NOT WANT TO USE THE BATHROOM, Y'KNOW...


HOLY FUCKING SHIT!!!

TOLDJA.

I KNOW WHO HE IS BEFORE HE EVEN SAYS HIS NAME.
CHAOS...
HHHHUUURRRRPP...

THE HANGOVER HAS BLURRED EVERYTHING ELSE, BUT I'VE READ MY LOVECRAFT. I'D BE SHOCKED IF HE DIDN'T SAY WHAT I EXPECT...
UUUUGGGHHH...

I AM THE CRAWLING CHAOS! I AM NYARLATHOTEP!!!
HE'S LIKE THE GUY AT EVERY HALLOWEEN PARTY WEARING AN OBVIOUS COSTUME THAT HE STILL EXPLAINS TO EVERYONE.

EXCEPT IT'S APRIL. AND THAT'S THE MOST REALISTIC COSTUME I'VE EVER SEEN.
THE ACTUAL NIGHT-GAUNT IS AN ESPECIALLY CONVINCING TOUCH.

ALRIGHT, LUCY, HIT HIM WITH A HARD QUESTION RIGHT UP FRONT.
HOW... HOW'D YOU GET IN? DOOR'S LOCKED.
WELL DONE.
CUTE. BUT SERIOUSLY, WE NEED TO GET SOME MAYHEM GOING. THE BACKGROUND ENTROPY HERE - THE MESS, THE CONFUSION - IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO KEEP ME OUT OF THE DREAMLAND FOR LONG.
...WAIT A MINUTE. CONFUSION? YOU'RE SERIOUS, AREN'T YOU? YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY I'VE COME?
I'M GLAD YOU GOT IT. IF I KEEP TALKING I MIGHT HURL AGAIN.
I "GOT" NOTHING! IT'S NOT LIKE A 2700-YEAR-OLD SPELL TO SUMMON AN OUTER GOD IS SOMETHING YOU ACCIDENTALLY PERFORM IN A DRUNKEN STUPOR!
NO, I PERFORMED IT ON PURPOSE!
...THE ACCIDENT WAS THAT IT WORKED.
GGRAAAHH!!! I HAD A FEELING GIVING BEER TO MANKIND WAS GOING TO COME BACK TO KICK ME IN THE STONES.
YOU GAVE MANKIND BEER?
COME ON, IT'S AN ADDICTIVE, POTENTIALLY LETHAL POISON THAT MAKES YOU YEARN TO FULFILL YOUR MOST CHAOTIC DESIRES. SOUNDS LIKE ME, RIGHT? I MEAN, YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH ME, NYARLATHOTEP, RIGHT?
I'VE READ EVERYTHING BY LOVECRAFT AT LEAST TWICE.. HE MENTIONED A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOU.
ALL BLACK, LONE OUTER GOD WALKING EARTH, A TASTE FOR ELECTRICITY AND SHOWMANSHIP. HE LEFT OUT THE PART WHERE YOU'RE REAL.

LOVECRAFT? YOU MEAN RANDY CARTER? OLD DREAMER; BIT OF A SNOB, BUT I GUESS WHEN ARISTOCRATS GO BROKE THEY'VE GOT NOTHING BUT THEIR BREEDING LEFT TO BRAG ABOUT. HE'D BE GLAD TO KNOW HE HAS A LEGACY, AT LEAST.
IT'S TIME WE DISCUSS WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOUR LEGACY, YES?
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, MY LADY?
SNAP
I'M WORKING ON IT, THANKS. I'M IN A BAND. I'M TRYING TO EARN A DEGREE. AND, THANKS FOR REMINDING ME, I'VE GOT A CLASS IN –
SHIT!!!
DEGREE... CLASS... WAIT, ARE YOU RUSHING TO ADHERE TO A STRUCTURED SCHEDULE? DAMN IT, THAT WON'T WORK FOR ME!
SINCE WHEN DO I GIVE A SHIT ABOUT WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?
SINCE THE SPELL YOU CAST LAST NIGHT! YOU ARE BOUND TO ME IN A METAPHYSICAL CONTRACT, WHEREIN I SERVE AS HERALD AND CHAMPION OF WHATEVER CAUSE YOU DESIRE, IN RETURN FOR ONE THING –
– CHAOS.
THWAP!

BY THE WAY, ARE YOU A SATANIST?
YOUR MUSIC COLLECTION. THERE WERE PENTAGRAMS AND SYMBOLIC SUGGESTIONS OF THE ABRAHAMIC HELL.
WHAT? NO, WHY?
NO WAY, DUDE, NONE OF THE REALLY GOOD METAL BANDS WRITE SONGS ABOUT SATAN ANYMORE.
INTERESTING. ANYWHO, CHAOS! IT FUELS MY EXISTENCE IN THIS PLANE.
AS LONG AS WE UNDERMINE SENTIENT ATTEMPTS AT UNIVERSAL ORDER, I AM AT YOUR COMMAND.
...HEY, WHERE YA GOING?
TO CLASS. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS SHIT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT CHAOS? WHAT ABOUT THY WILL BEIN' DONE AND ALL?
MY WILL BE DONE? OKAY. COMMANDMENT #1: CLEAN UP MY BATHROOM AND GET THE FUCK OUT!!!
WELL, YOU HEARD HER! CLEAN UP THE BATHROOM!
WRRBBLLL!!!
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? SHIT ROLLS DOWNHILL.
SLAM!!!
...ALTHOUGH YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT BY LOOKING AT THIS CEILING...

..WHOA, WHERE AM I? IS THIS SOME KIND OF *RITUAL?*
....KPLS ENPACN AIEP... REC EFFEBOE...
THIS BETTER NOT BE THE PIT & THE PENDULUM. I AM SO NOT IN THE MOOD FOR HARD CHOICES RIGHT NOW.
...AND DESPITE PERFECTLY EXPRESSING HIS ANARCHIST PHILOSOPHY, *WALDEN* NONETHELESS FAILS TO EXPLAIN THOREAU'S *PERSISTENT NECKBEARD.* ISN'T THAT RIGHT, LUCY?
LUCY?
WELCOME BACK, SLEEPING BEAUTY.
BAHAHAHAHA
HAHA
HEHE
HEEHEEHEEHEEHEE
LOL
AAHAHA
HAHA
I'LL SPEAK TO YOU LATER, DARLING.
SHIT.

LUCY? THAT'S THE THIRD CLASS OF MINE YOU'VE SLEPT THROUGH THIS MONTH. AM I THAT BORING?
SORRY, PROFESSOR PHELPS... OH, SHIT, I'M SO OUT OF SORTS I CAN'T EVEN KEEP MY INSTRUCTORS STRAIGHT.
DOUBLE SORRY, DR. BOWEN.
THAT'S ALRIGHT. PHELPS, HUH? HOW'S THAT GOING?
UM, NOT TOO BAD. I GUESS. STRESS-FUL, BUT IT IS MY MOST IMPORTANT CLASS OF THE SEMESTER.
...NO OFFENSE.
NONE TAKEN. LISTEN, JUST TAKE CARE, ALRIGHT? TRY NOT TO WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT DR. PHELPS.
AND, SLEEPING BEAUTY? GET SOME REST OUTSIDE OF CLASS, OKAY?
THAT WAS ODD. PROFS DON'T USUALLY ASK ABOUT EACH OTHER LIKE THAT. BUT THEN, WHY NOT? TODAY HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN PAR FOR THE COURSE.
EXCUSE ME, YOUNG LADY -
- I WONDER IF YOU WOULD KINDLY DIRECT ME TO THE EGYPTOLOGY DEPARTMENT?
SPEAKING OF WEIRD...
SORRY, MAN, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE ONE AT THIS SCHOOL. ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PARTICULAR PERSON?
WHY, YES, ACTUALLY...

THE OWNER OF ONE SLIGHTLY-USED SHAPESHIFTING DEMIGOD AND HIS SEEING-EYE GAUNT!
I DO THE SEEING, BY THE WAY. HE DOESN'T ACTUALLY HAVE EYES.

OH, CRAP. I WAS HOPING YOU WERE JUST A DRUNKEN NIGHTMARE.
IF YOU HADN'T DRUNK ALL THE WHISKEY, I COULD HAVE BEEN.
ALSO, YOUR BATHROOM'S CLEAN. SO, Y'KNOW. YOU'RE WELCOME.

GREAT. NOW, WITH THAT BUSINESS COMPLETED, CAN YOU PLEASE GO FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO PLAY WITH? I'M BUSY.
NOT THAT SIMPLE, MY LADY. WE'RE IN A BINDING CONTRACT HERE.
THE LAST FOUR CONTRACTS I SIGNED ALL GOT VOIDED BECAUSE I DIDN'T PAY MY BILLS. I'D LIKE TO SKIP THE STRESS AND MOVE STRAIGHT TO THE DISCONNECTION, THANKS.

I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO WALK OUT OF, HERE.
THE KIND OF POWER YOU'LL HAVE, FOR THE PRICE OF ADVANCING THE CORRODING ENTROPY WHICH IS INEVITABLE ANYWAY!

AND, YES, I JUST TELEPORTED THROUGH SHADOWS, KIND OF A GOOD ILLUSTRATION OF THAT POWER I MENTIONED.
I DON'T WANT THE POWER, OKAY? I'VE GOT ENOUGH WEIGHT ON MY SHOULDERS TRYING TO MAINTAIN A LIFE I'VE WORKED PRETTY FUCKING HARD FOR.
THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS UNDERMINE THE CIVILIZATION THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE. SO, THANKS, BUT NO THANKS.
I HADN'T WANTED TO GET GRIM SO QUICKLY, BUT CONSIDER THIS: I'M JUST THE BLACKENED TIP OF A VERY LARGE AND VERY SCARY ICEBERG. WHEN YOU LEARN A-ABOUT THIS WORLD OF MINE, IT LEARNS ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE ALREADY ON THE RADAR JUST FOR SUMMONING ME. YOU NEED MY PROTECTION. WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU'LL BEG FOR IT.
I WILL NEVER BEG. NOT YOU, NOT ANYONE.
I HAVEN'T HAD THE BEST LUCK WITH PROTECTORS, EITHER. I'LL LOOK AFTER MYSELF, THANK YOU.
NOW, FOR THE LAST TIME, FUCK OFF!!!
I'VE GOT MORE CLASSES AND BAND PRACTICE TONIGHT, AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU AT ANY OF THEM. COMPRENDE?

"THY WILL BE DONE."
MORE TO DRINK, INANNA, MY GODDESS?
INDEED, THANK YOU...
...THIS SIMPLE HUMAN COPULATION BORES ME ANYMORE.
WELL THEN, MY GODDESS...
HAVE I GOT A PLAN TO SPICE THINGS UP FOR YOU!!!
NYARLATHOTEP?!
THE BLACK-ONE-AND-ONLY, MY LADY! I HAPPEN TO BE SORTA SANS-PATRON RIGHT NOW, AND I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU NEED BODIES TO WRITHE ABOUT IN ECSTASY AND SUCH.
I THOUGHT I'D POP BY AND OFFER MY SERVICES TO, Y'KNOW, TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM IN SAID CAPACITY. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

GET AWAY FROM ME, BLACK ONE! I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!
THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID LAST TIME!
LAST TIME? HA! WHAT LAST TIME?
COME ON, YOU KNOW! LAST TIME, WITH ME AND YOU AND ABOUT FOUR OF YOUR MORE CURVACIOUS PRIESTESSES!
THAT NEVER HAPPENED.
WELL THEN, IF IT WASN'T A MEMORY, IT MUST'VE BEEN A PREMONITION! I ALWAYS CONFUSE THE TWO. IN THAT CASE, LET'S TAKE HER, AND HER, AND HER... AND WHY NOT HIM? AND...
...UH-OH.
THOOM!
LET ME KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.

PATRONAGE? NO WAY MAN, YOUR DEALS ARE TOTALLY FAUSTIAN. GOOD LUCK FINDING ANYONE, GOD OR MAN, DUMB ENOUGH TO GET INVOLED WITH YOU.
OH YEAH? WELL, NONE OF THE REALLY GOOD METAL BANDS WRITE SONGS ABOUT YOU ANYMORE! HOW DO YA LIKE THAT?!!
...I'M A SAD SATAN.

NO.
NO.
NADA.
NO.
NO.
YES!
SHUT UP!
NO.
SCRUFFY
NO.
NO.
DENIED.
ATM
NO.
THERE MUST BE SOME-FUCKING-BODY IN THIS UNIVERSE WHO WILL HIRE ME!!!

SO YEAH, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ONLY ON A COUPLE OF ALBUMS, I'D SAY GAR SAMUELSON IS STILL MY FAVORITE DRUMMER OF THE BIG FOUR OF THRASH.
BLAH BLAH, EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THIS AMERICAN BIG FOUR SCHEISSE, BUT WE HAD A BETTER BIG FOUR IN DEUTSCHLAND, CARLOS: KREATOR, SODOM, DESTRUCTION, CELTIC FROST.
GUNNAR, WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING TO? CELTIC FROST IS FROM SWITZERLAND.
JA, DER SCHWEIZ. THEY ARE A GERMAN PEOPLE, MIKE. IT IS THE SAME THING.
JUST TWO WEEKS AGO YOU TOLD US THE SWISS WEREN'T REAL GERMANS BECAUSE THEY TALK FUNNY, HAVE A SQUARE FLAG AND MAKE CHEESE WITH HOLES.

THIS IS TRUE! HAVE YOU EVER HEARD SWISS? IT SOUNDS LIKE THEIR LIPS ARE IN SOMEONE'S ASSHOLE. 'SCHWYZERDEUTSCH, SCHWYZERDEUTSCH!' UGH.
SO CELTIC FROST ISN'T GERMAN?
JA!
NEIN!
...JEIN?
WHAT'S BUGGING YOU, CHICK?
HUH? OH... I CAN'T REALLY HIDE ANYTHING FROM YOU, CAN I, CASSANDRA?
NOT SINCE SIXTH GRADE.
THAT ASIDE, YOUR GROWLS WEREN'T QUITE AS NUN-SLAUGHTERINGLY EVIL AS USUAL. SOMETHING'S UP. SPILL.

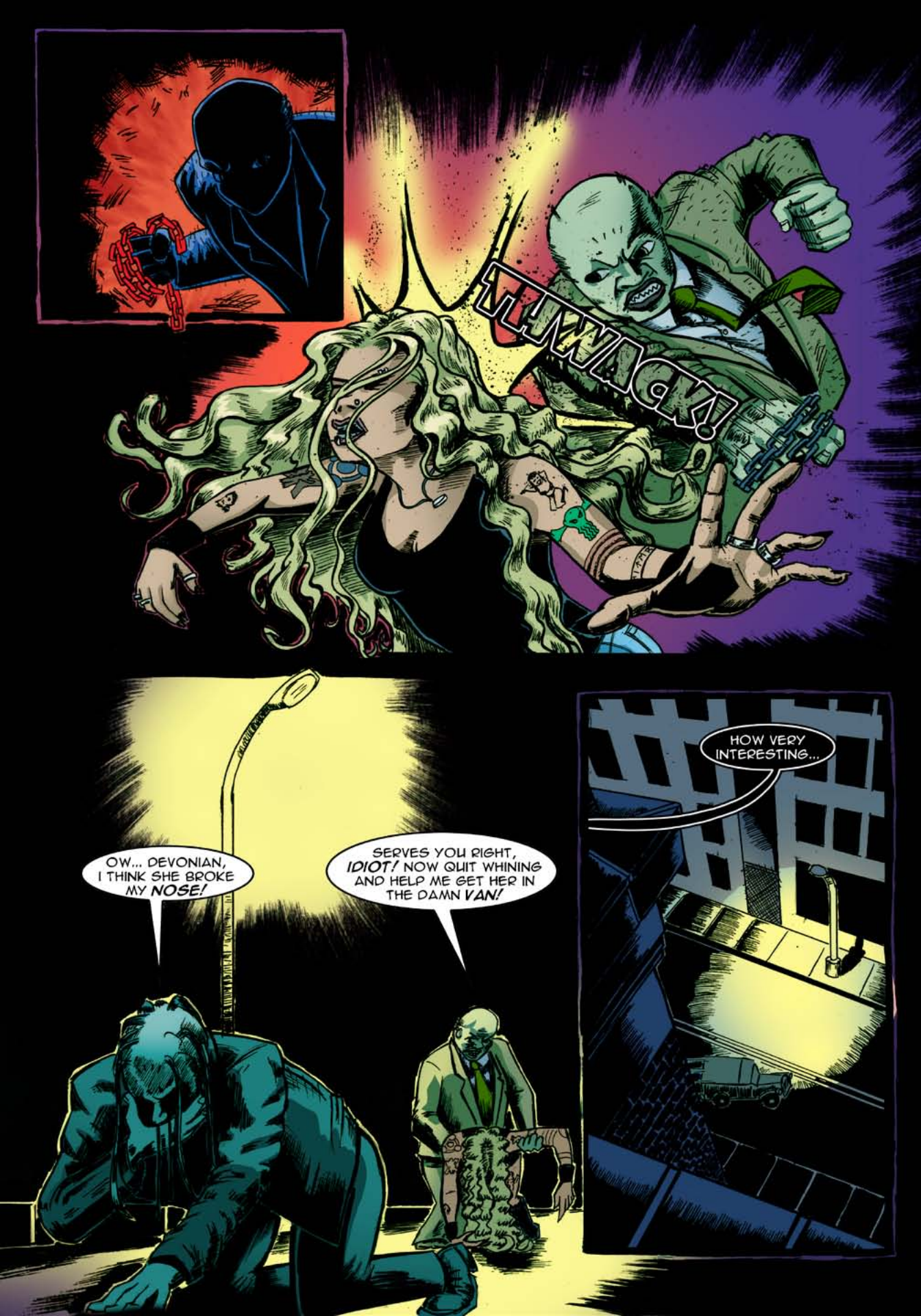
IT'S BEEN A FUCKED-UP DAY.
SO WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT ALL OF YOUR FUCKED-UP DAYS. I'M SURE SOME OF THOSE WERE WORSE.
YEAH... IT DOESN'T FEEL THAT BAD. I DON'T THINK I BELIEVE IT YET.
LET ME SEE IF I CAN.
OKAY... WELL, TO START, I MET THIS... THIS GUY... UM...
...WHAT?
YOU WERE RIGHT, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER!
OH, NO! EWW! NO WAY WOULD I - WAIT, WHAT'S SO FUCKING HARD TO BELIEVE ABOUT ME HOOKING UP WITH A GUY?
I DON'T DOUBT THAT YOU COULD GET ONE, LUCE; JUST PUT OUT A CALL ON-STAGE AND THE METALHEADS WILL LINE UP AROUND THE BLOCK.
I JUST CAN'T RECALL YOU ACTUALLY BEING WITH ANYONE SINCE WE WERE TEENAGERS. I KINDA THOUGHT MUSIC HAD REPLACED YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

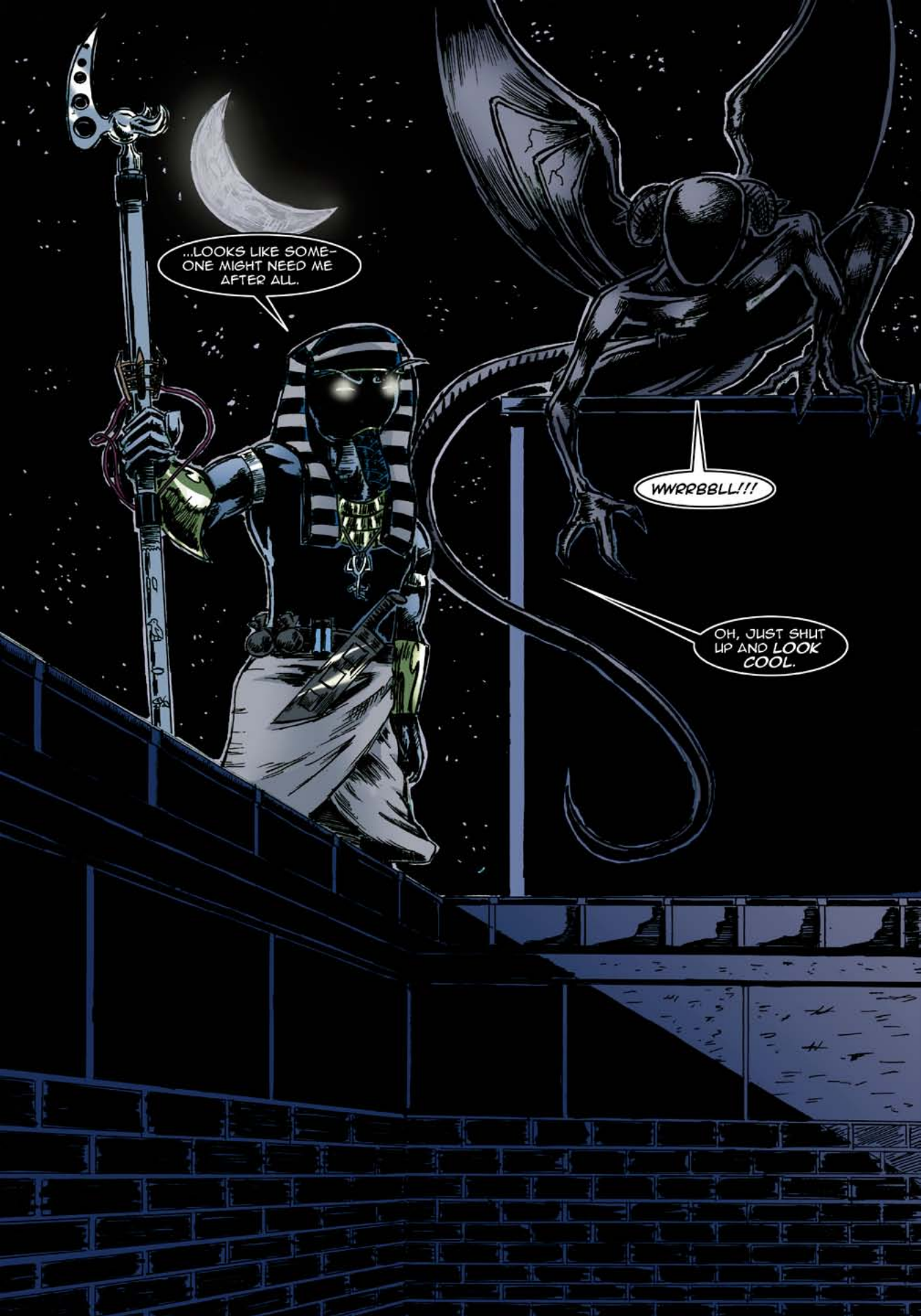
BASICALLY IT HAS. THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE THOUGH. I JUST...
...I'M JUST EXHAUSTED. I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT WHEN I CAN SORT IT INTO WORDS.
A LYRICIST WITH NO WORDS; NOW I AM WORRIED.
BY THE WAY, YOU OWE ME ONE. MIKE IS STILL STEAMED ABOUT YOU NOT HAVING LYRICS FOR THOSE TWO SONGS YET.
I TALKED HIM OUT OF GOING OFF ON YOU TONIGHT. TOLD HIM I'D GIVE YOU A PUSH INSTEAD. SO...
...PUSH.
OH FUCK, I HADN'T EVEN NOTICED THAT HE DIDN'T MENTION IT. THANKS, CASS, I OWE YOU ABOUT A MILLION NOW.

I DO OWE CASS BIG TIME, AND NOT JUST FOR TONIGHT. FOR EVERYTHING SHE'S EVER DONE FOR ME...
SHE STUCK WITH ME THROUGH THE ABSOLUTE WORST TIMES IN MY LIFE. PULLED ME UP WHEN I THOUGHT I'D NEVER LEAVE THOSE DARK PLACES...
MIKE HAS EVERY RIGHT TO BE MAD AT ME. I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY LOW OUTPUT TOO.
TWO SONGS. I USED TO CHURN THAT OUT IN A DAY. BUT I'M NOT FIFTEEN ANYMORE. THE ANGER DOESN'T PUSH ITS WAY OUT ANYMORE; I HAVE TO COAX IT.
FOUR DEMOS, A SELF-RELEASED ALBUM, THE EP LAST YEAR WHEN WE GOT SIGNED... WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ANY SONGS LEFT?
I MEAN, I'M HAPPIER NOW, BUT IT WAS JUST SO MUCH EASIER TO WRITE WHEN THAT DARKNESS JUST JUMPS RIGHT OUT AND GRABS YOU –
HEY THERE, LADY!
OH, YOU AGAIN! DIDN'T I TELL YOU EARLIER, I –
...OH.

GOTCHA! YOU'RE COMING WITH US, SURFACE-DWELLER!
KRAK!!!
UUUGGH!!!

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?
...KIDNAPPING YOU?
OH. OKAY.


THWACK!
OW... DEVONIAN, I THINK SHE BROKE MY NOSE!
SERVES YOU RIGHT, IDIOT! NOW QUIT WHINING AND HELP ME GET HER IN THE DAMN VAN!
HOW VERY INTERESTING...


...LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE MIGHT NEED ME AFTER ALL.
WWRRBBLL!!!
OH, JUST SHUT UP AND LOOK COOL.

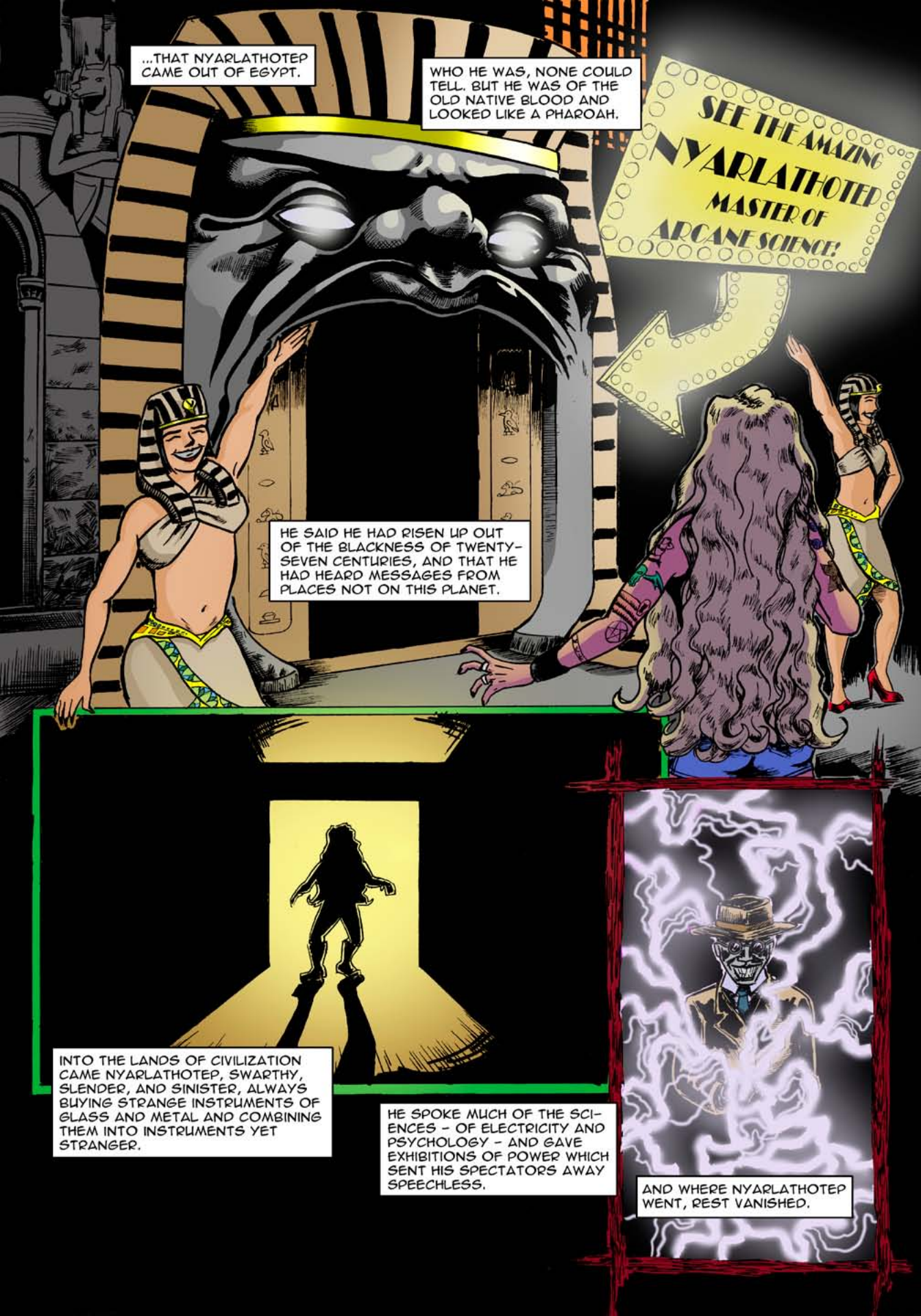
ART BY JEREMY D KING

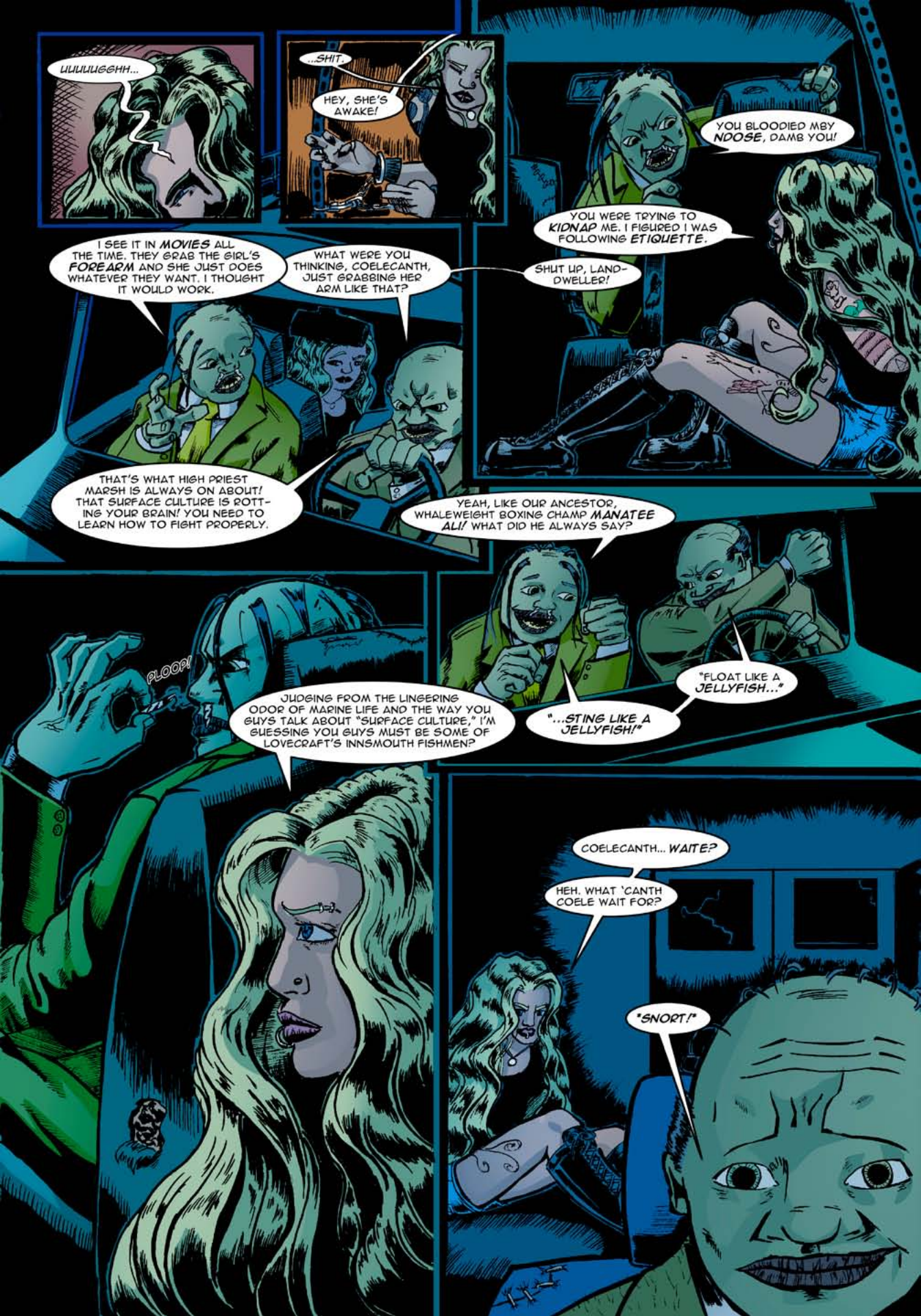
#3

NYARLATHOTEP... THE CRAWLING CHAOS...

...I AM THE LAST...

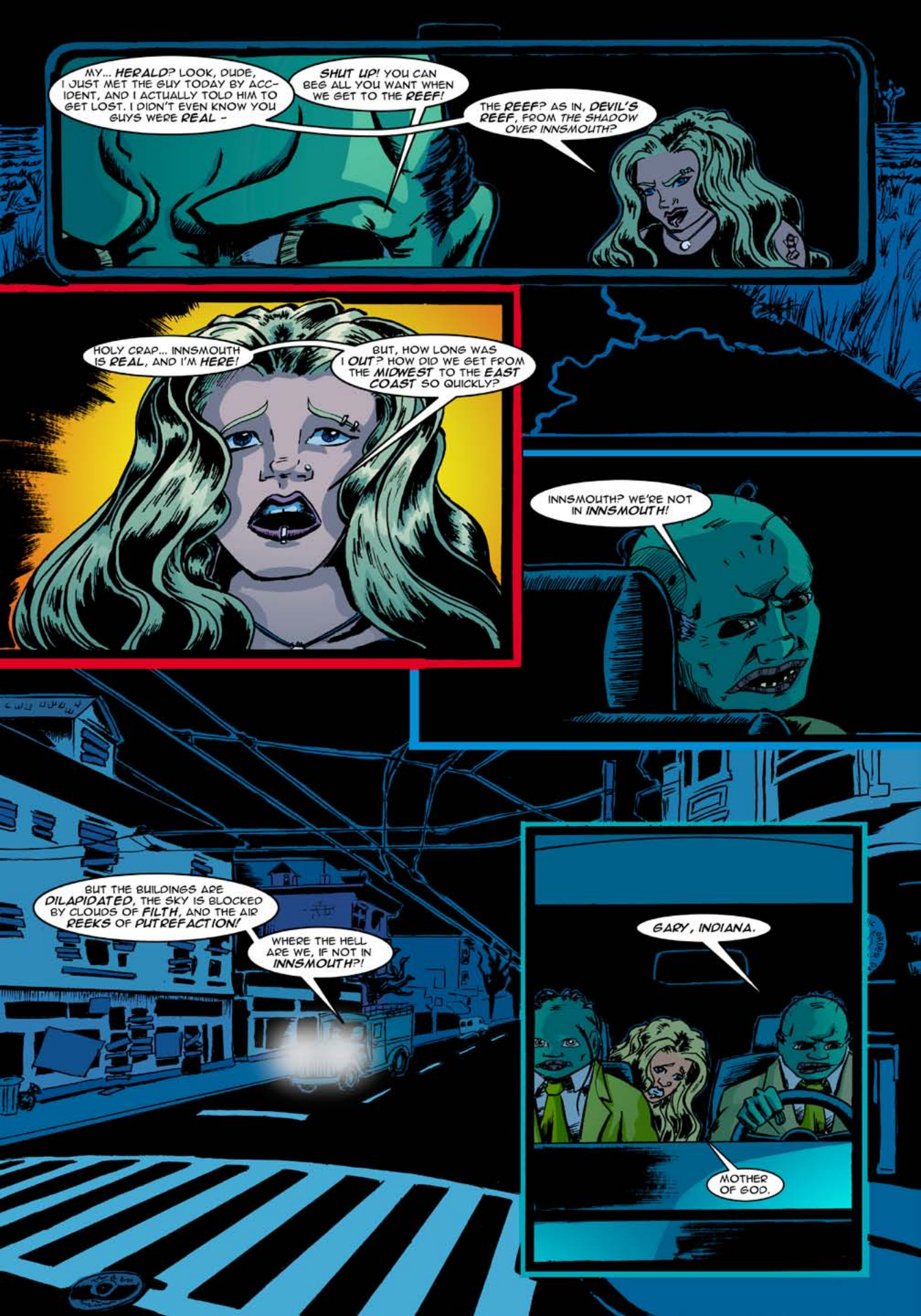
...I WILL TELL THE AUDIENT VOID.


...THAT NYARLATHOTEP CAME OUT OF EGYPT.
WHO HE WAS, NONE COULD TELL. BUT HE WAS OF THE OLD NATIVE BLOOD AND LOOKED LIKE A PHAROAH.
SEE THE AMAZING NYARLATHOTEP MASTER OF ARCANE SCIENCE!
HE SAID HE HAD RISEN UP OUT OF THE BLACKNESS OF TWENTY-SEVEN CENTURIES, AND THAT HE HAD HEARD MESSAGES FROM PLACES NOT ON THIS PLANET.
INTO THE LANDS OF CIVILIZATION CAME NYARLATHOTEP, SWARTHY, SLENDER, AND SINISTER, ALWAYS BUYING STRANGE INSTRUMENTS OF GLASS AND METAL AND COMBINING THEM INTO INSTRUMENTS YET STRANGER.
HE SPOKE MUCH OF THE SCIENCES - OF ELECTRICITY AND PSYCHOLOGY - AND GAVE EXHIBITIONS OF POWER WHICH SENT HIS SPECTATORS AWAY SPEECHLESS.
AND WHERE NYARLATHOTEP WENT, REST VANISHED.


UUUUUGGHH...
...SHIT.
HEY, SHE'S AWAKE!
YOU BLOODIED MBY NDOSE, DAMB YOU!
YOU WERE TRYING TO KIDNAP ME. I FIGURED I WAS FOLLOWING ETIQUETTE.
SHUT UP, LAND-DWELLER!
I SEE IT IN MOVIES ALL THE TIME. THEY GRAB THE GIRL'S FOREARM AND SHE JUST DOES WHATEVER THEY WANT. I THOUGHT IT WOULD WORK.
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, COELECANTH, JUST GRABBING HER ARM LIKE THAT?
THAT'S WHAT HIGH PRIEST MARSH IS ALWAYS ON ABOUT! THAT SURFACE CULTURE IS ROTTING YOUR BRAIN! YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO FIGHT PROPERLY.
YEAH, LIKE OUR ANCESTOR, WHALEWEIGHT BOXING CHAMP MANATEE ALI! WHAT DID HE ALWAYS SAY?
"FLOAT LIKE A JELLYFISH..."
"...STING LIKE A JELLYFISH!"
PLOOP!
JUDGING FROM THE LINGERING ODOR OF MARINE LIFE AND THE WAY YOU GUYS TALK ABOUT "SURFACE CULTURE," I'M GUESSING YOU GUYS MUST BE SOME OF LOVECRAFT'S INNSMOUTH FISHMEN?
COELECANTH... WAITE?
HEH. WHAT 'CANTH COELE WAIT FOR?
"SNORT!"

YOU'VE GOT TO BE FUCKING KIDDING ME!!!
BAHAHAHAH! OH, THAT BRINGS BACK MEMORIES!
SOMEBODY WANT TO EXPLAIN WHAT WAS SO FUNNY AND/OR INFURIATING?
EVERY YEAR, AFTER THE FIRST ROLL CALL OF THE YEAR, THAT'S ALL I HEARD: "OH, WHAT 'CANTH COELE WAITE FOR?" "HEY COELE, WHAT ARE YOU SO EXCITED ABOUT?"
IT DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD, BUT THEY KEPT GOING AND GOING, AND JUST WOULDN'T STOP!
YEAH. IT WAS HILARIOUS.
IT WAS NOT HILARIOUS! I USED TO HATE OUR PARENTS FOR GIVING ME THIS STUPID NAME!
I USED TO PRAY TO DAGON EVERY NIGHT THAT THEY'D GET OLD AND SCALY AND SINK INTO THE SEA AND GET COVERED WITH BARNACLES!!!
...AND THEN THEY DID.
...AND I WAS SAD.
WIMP.
SOUNDS ROUGH, MAN. I RAN INTO MY SHARE OF BULLIES, TOO. IT LEAVES YOU WITH LOTS OF ANGER. BUT YOU CAN MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU. LIKE ME, I'M IN A DEATH METAL BAND.

YOU ARE?! WHAT BAND?
NO WAY, THAT'S YOU? I HAVE YOUR FIRST ALBUM, "THE GILDED SPIRES OF THRAN!"
EVER HEAR OF OUKRANOS?
HAHAHA! THAT'S AWESOME, MAN! YOU KNOW WE'RE RECORDING A NEW ONE, RIGHT?
SKREEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!
ENOUGH!!!
THE BLACK ONE...AW, SHIT, YOU GUYS KNOW HIM, TOO?
COELECANTH, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE SO INFECTED WITH SURFACE CULTURE! THEY ARE OUSTIDERS! THEY ARE THE ENEMY! THAT'S WHY SHE'S HERE, REMEMBER? SHE'S THE PATRON OF THE BLACK ONE!
YOU'VE ASKED ENOUGH QUESTIONS, OUTSIDER! BY COMMAND OF THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON, YOU ARE TO DIE TONIGHT FOR THE CRIMES OF YOUR HERALD AGAINST OUR GREAT PROGENITORS, ABSU AND TIAMAT!


MY... HERALD? LOOK, DUDE, I JUST MET THE GUY TODAY BY ACCIDENT, AND I ACTUALLY TOLD HIM TO GET LOST. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU GUYS WERE REAL -
SHUT UP! YOU CAN BEG ALL YOU WANT WHEN WE GET TO THE REEF!
THE REEF? AS IN, DEVIL'S REEF, FROM THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH?
HOLY CRAP... INNSMOUTH IS REAL, AND I'M HERE!
BUT, HOW LONG WAS I OUT? HOW DID WE GET FROM THE MIDWEST TO THE EAST COAST SO QUICKLY?
INNSMOUTH? WE'RE NOT IN INNSMOUTH!
BUT THE BUILDINGS ARE DILAPIDATED, THE SKY IS BLOCKED BY CLOUDS OF FILTH, AND THE AIR REEKS OF PUTREFACTION!
WHERE THE HELL ARE WE, IF NOT IN INNSMOUTH?!
GARY, INDIANA.
MOTHER OF GOD.

LAKE MICHIGAN:
REEF
STEEL WORKS
THIS IS YOUR "REEF?"
THIS WAS THE CLOSEST TOWN THAT WE CONTROL, AND THERE'S NOT A REAL REEF IN LAKE MICHIGAN –
SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU!
AND HERE WE ARE, AT LAST...
...AFTER TWELVE MILLENNIA OF WAITING, OUR RETRIBUTION CAN FINALLY BEGIN.

PANTHALASSA MARSH; WERE THE HONOR OF CAPTURING THIS SURFACE WOMAN TO INITIATE OUR RESTITUTION UPON THE BLACK ONE NOT GREAT ENOUGH, MY BROTHER AND I ARE FURTHER HUMBLED THAT THE VENERABLE MARSH FAMILY HAS SEEN FIT TO GRACE US WITH YOUR SALINOUS PRESENCE.
BROWN-NOSE.
SHUT UP, HUMAN!

PANTHALASSA, ON A PERSONAL NOTE, I EAGERLY ANTICIPATE THIS SACRIFICE TO FATHER DAGON, AND EXPRESS MY SINCEREST HOPE THAT THIS WILL MOVE THE WAITE NAME BACK AMONG THE RESPECTED FAMILIES OF INNSMOUTH, SO MUCH CLOSER TO YOURS... AND TO YOU.

GET YOUR HANDS OFF HER, WAITE, YOU SYCOPHANT! STOP WASTING TIME AND PERFORM THE SACRIFICE, AND MAYBE YOU'LL BE FIT TO PREEN HER SCALES IF YOU DON'T SCREW IT UP!

LOOK DOWN ON US WHILE YOU CAN, YOU LOUT; MY ANCESTORS WERE FOUNDERS WHO TOOK THE THIRD OATH FROM THE VERY FIRST PRIEST TO EMERGE FROM THE SEA! SOMEDAY SOON WE'LL SEE WHO'S THE SHARK AND WHO'S JUST A BARNACLE!

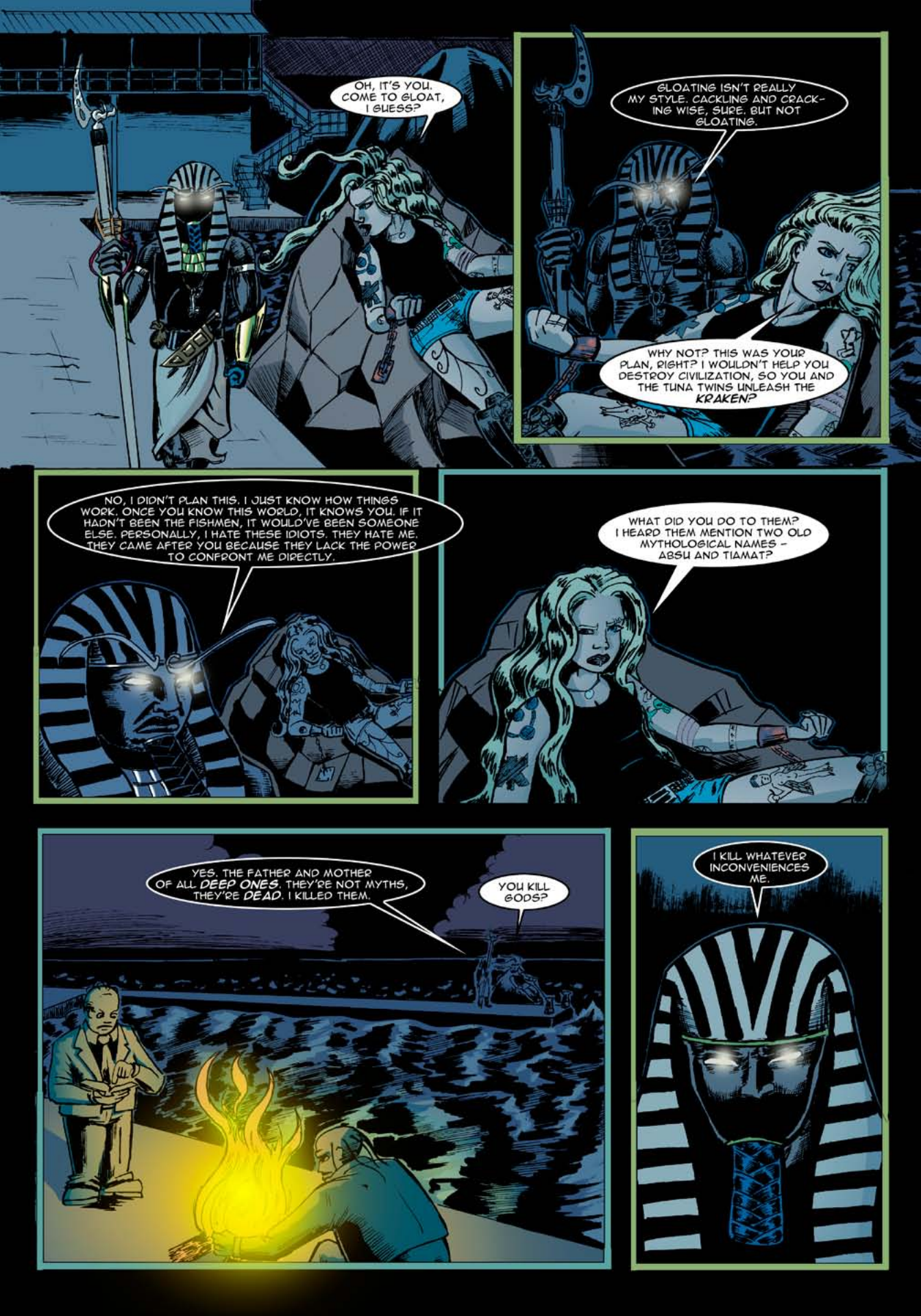
THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN SENT. HE APPROACHES.
WHAT KIND OF DAMSEL-IN-DISTRESS BULLSHIT IS THIS? CHAINED TO THE ROCKS? SEA MONSTERS? HOW MANY MORE RIDICULOUS MELODRAMATIC TROPES CAN YOU POSSIBLY FIT INTO THIS SITUATION?

THESE CENTURIES-OLD RUSTED CHAINS SHOULD HOLD HER! NOW, LET'S LEAVE OUR PRISONER ALONE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME WHILE WE GO MAKE LENGTHY AND INDEFINITE PREPARATIONS FOR THE RITUAL!
WELL-SAID, BROTHER!
OY.

CLINK!

COME ON, COME OOONNN!!!
CLINK! CLINK! CLINK! CLINK!

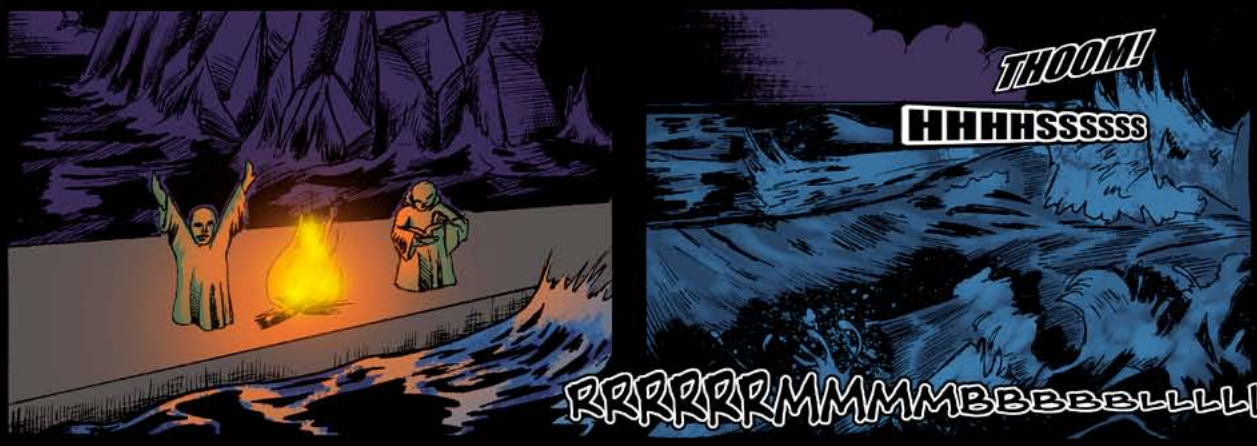
GOD DAMN IT...
I *DID* TRY TO WARN YOU...


OH, IT'S YOU. COME TO GLOAT, I GUESS?
GLOATING ISN'T REALLY MY STYLE. CACKLING AND CRACKING WISE, SURE. BUT NOT GLOATING.
WHY NOT? THIS WAS YOUR PLAN, RIGHT? I WOULDN'T HELP YOU DESTROY CIVILIZATION, SO YOU AND THE TUNA TWINS UNLEASH THE KRAKEN?
NO, I DIDN'T PLAN THIS. I JUST KNOW HOW THINGS WORK. ONCE YOU KNOW THIS WORLD, IT KNOWS YOU. IF IT HADN'T BEEN THE FISHMEN, IT WOULD'VE BEEN SOMEONE ELSE. PERSONALLY, I HATE THESE IDIOTS. THEY HATE ME. THEY CAME AFTER YOU BECAUSE THEY LACK THE POWER TO CONFRONT ME DIRECTLY.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO THEM? I HEARD THEM MENTION TWO OLD MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES – ABSU AND TIAMAT?
YES. THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF ALL DEEP ONES. THEY'RE NOT MYTHS, THEY'RE DEAD. I KILLED THEM.
YOU KILL GODS?
I KILL WHATEVER INCONVENIENCES ME.

EVEN ME?
I DID NOT PLAN THIS. AS I HAVE TOLD YOU.
YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY WORKING TO PREVENT IT, EITHER.
YOU REFUSED MY PROTECTION. AND I DID WARN YOU. YOU'RE TOO STUBBORN FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
YOU DON'T KNOW A GOD-DAMN THING ABOUT ME! WHAT DO YOU CARE, ANYWAY? WHY ARE YOU STILL HANGING AROUND ME, IF YOU'RE NOT HERE TO BRAG ABOUT BEING RIGHT?
YOU CAN STILL ACCEPT THE AGREEMENT. BE MY PATRON, ENTITLED TO MY PROTECTION. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END THIS WAY.
I'VE REJECTED YOU TWICE NOW ON PRINCIPLE. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK NOW WILL BE ANY DIFFERENT?
YOUR PRINCIPLES ARE ABOUT TO GET YOU DEVOURED BY A PRIMORDIAL SEA-GOD. I'D CALL THAT A PRETTY STRONG MOTIVATOR.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE US OFTEN UNMAKE US. MAYBE I'LL DIE NOW BY STANDING BY MY WORD, BUT WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?
I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA WHY YOU EXIST, WHY YOU LIVE. BUT IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD DIE FOR?
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
RRRRMMMBBBLLLLE
DAGON. WHEN HE RISES, YOU'LL BEG FOR MY HELP.

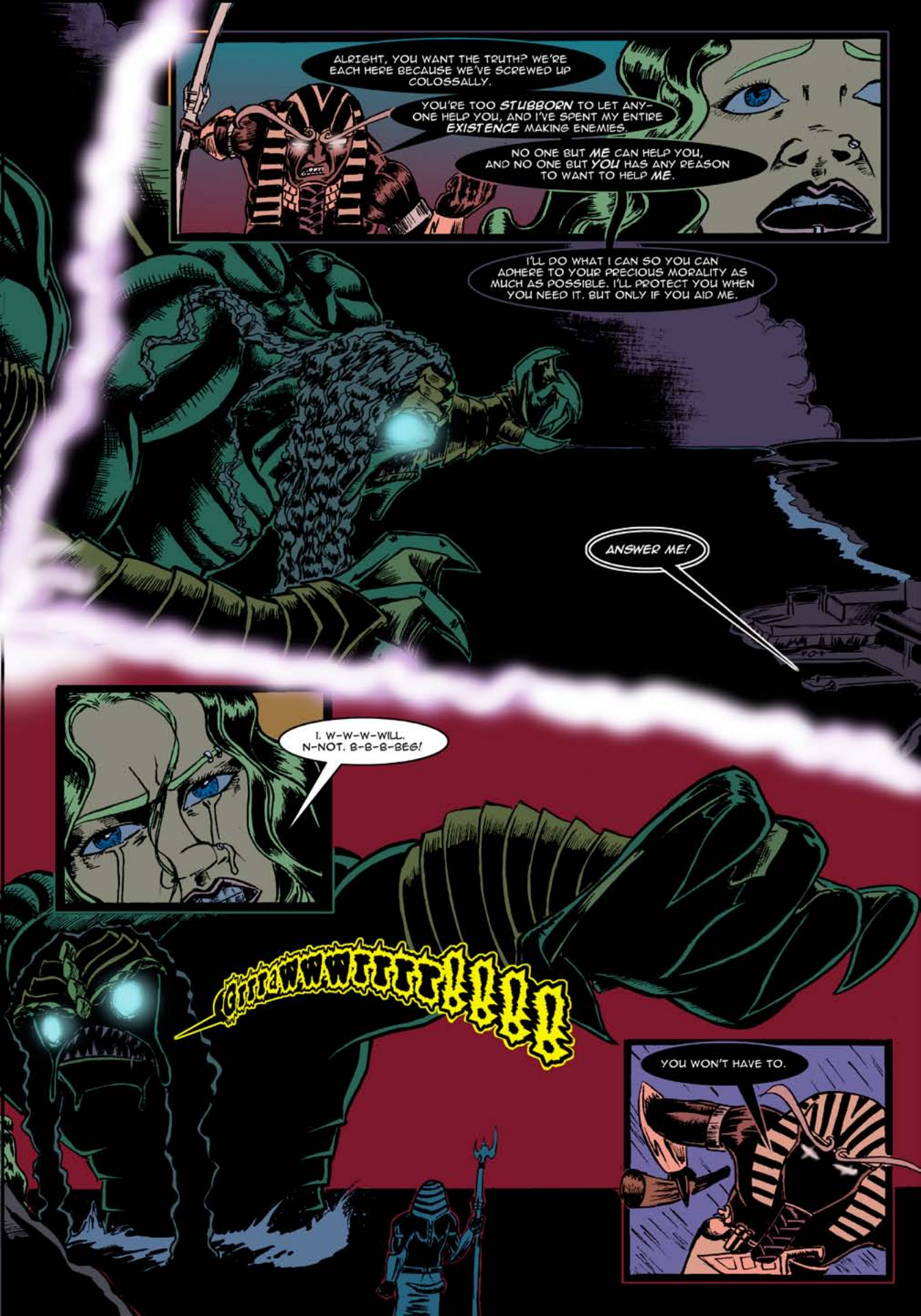
I DO NOT BEG.
WE'LL SEE.


THOOM!
HHHHSSSSSS
RRRRRRMMMMBBBBBLLLLL

RRRRMMMMBBBBLLLLLLLLLLLL

GRRRNNNNNN

HOLY... FUCKING...OH NO... NO...NONONO...
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.
SHUT UP!
YOU REALLY WANT TO DIE LIKE THIS? THE LIFE YOU WORKED FOR, SNUFFED WITHOUT A WHISPER?
NO BAND, NO DEGREE? NOTHING?
CLINK-CLINK CLINK-CLINK


ALRIGHT, YOU WANT THE TRUTH? WE'RE EACH HERE BECAUSE WE'VE SCREWED UP COLOSSALLY.
YOU'RE TOO STUBBORN TO LET ANYONE HELP YOU, AND I'VE SPENT MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE MAKING ENEMIES.
NO ONE BUT ME CAN HELP YOU, AND NO ONE BUT YOU HAS ANY REASON TO WANT TO HELP ME.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN SO YOU CAN ADHERE TO YOUR PRECIOUS MORALITY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. I'LL PROTECT YOU WHEN YOU NEED IT. BUT ONLY IF YOU AID ME.
ANSWER ME!
I. W-W-W-WILL. N-NOT. B-B-B-BEG!
YOU WON'T HAVE TO.

DAGON, FATHER OF A RACE OF INBREEDING SEA-SCUM!

I SLEW YOUR SIRES AT THE DAWN OF MANKIND, AND I'LL DO THE SAME TO YOU!!!

BAAAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!

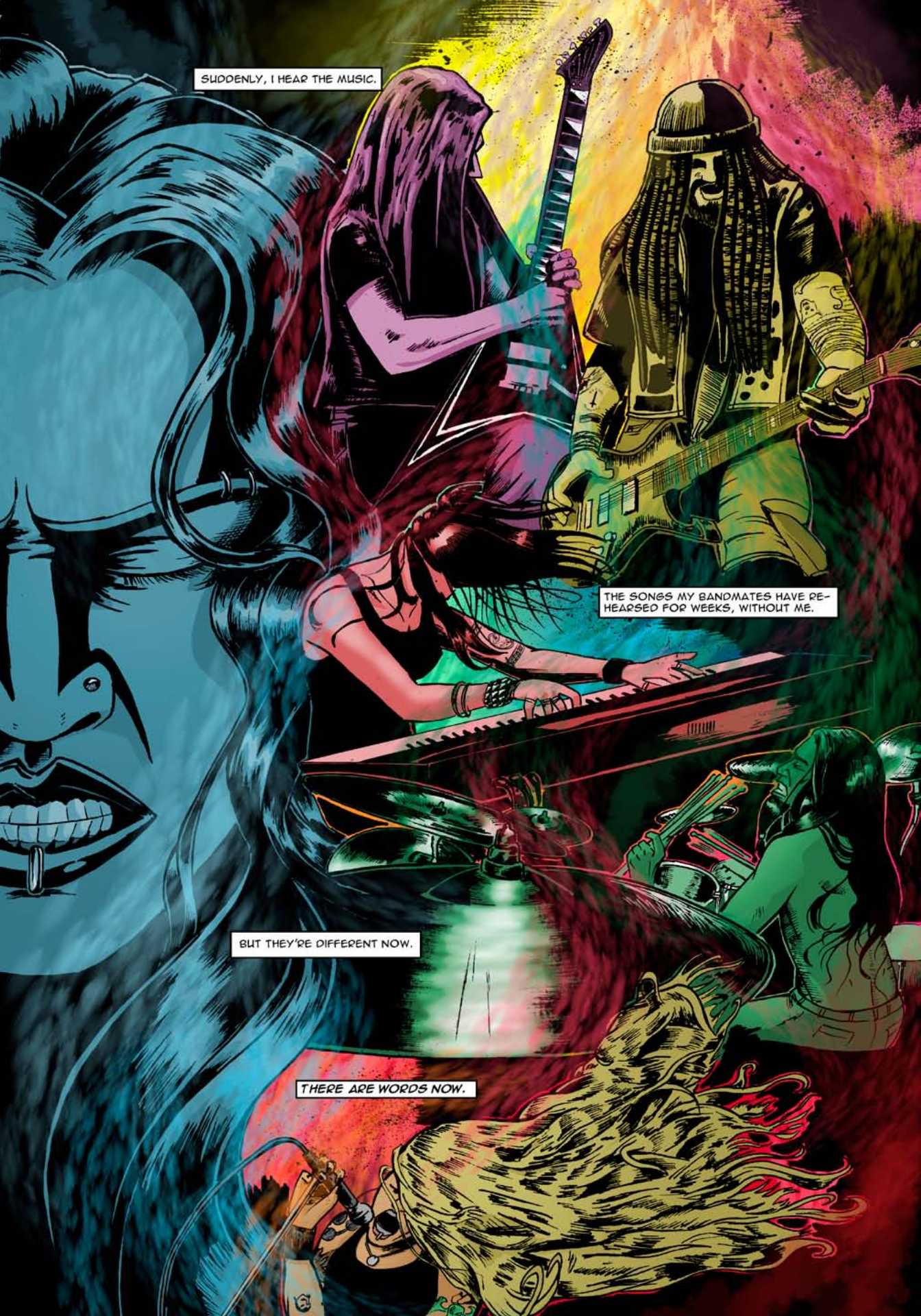
FATHER ABSU, IT'S THE BLACK ONE HIMSELF!!!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

NO, YOU COWARD, WE KILL THE WOMAN AND DRAIN HIS POWER! COME ON!

HEY, YOU HICKS! MAKE YOURSELVES USEFUL AND GET ME SOME TARTAR SAUCE FOR THIS FISH-FRY!!!

BLLLOOOORRRRRWWWWW
HOW DO I EVEN PROCESS THIS?
SEA-GODS, SHADOW BEINGS... EVERYTHING I READ ABOUT IN FICTION IS COMING TO LIFE AROUND ME...
CREATURES EMERGE FROM THE DARKNESS ITSELF, WHERE NOTHING COULD HAVE LAIN CONCEALED. THIS IS REAL.
BUT PERHAPS MOST UNBELIEVABLE OF ALL... IS HIM. WHAT HE'S DOING, NO ONE HAS EVER DONE FOR ME IN MY LIFE.
HE'S FIGHTING FOR ME.
HE'S LAUGHING INTO THE FACE OF A GOD... FOR ME.


SUDDENLY, I HEAR THE MUSIC.
THE SONGS MY BANDMATES HAVE REHEARSED FOR WEEKS, WITHOUT ME.
BUT THEY'RE DIFFERENT NOW.
THERE ARE WORDS NOW.

THAT WAKES ME UP.
FUCKING CHAINS... HEY, COELECANTH, OLD BUDDY! WANT TO GET ME OUT OF THESE THINGS?
OKAY, SURE. BUT... WAIT.
WHAT THE HELL FOR?
CAN I HAVE A COPY OF YOUR NEW ALBUM WHEN IT COMES OUT?
DUDE, I'LL THANK YOU FOR THE *WILD NIGHT* IN *HANDCUFFS* IN THE LINER NOTES IF YOU WANT, JUST LET ME OUT SO I CAN WRITE IT!
ON THAT NOTE, DO YOU HAVE A PEN?

WELL, THAT WAS *PUNGENT*. WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE WRITING?
LYRICS. LYRICS I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO WRITE UNTIL NOW. NYARLY, MAN, YOU JUST SAVED MY ASS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. THANK YOU.
I'M QUITE USEFUL TO HAVE AROUND. BUT IT DOESN'T COME FREE, YOU KNOW.
YEAH... LISTEN, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THIS WORLD THAT'S OPENED UP BENEATH ME, EVEN THOUGH I'VE EVIDENTLY READ ABOUT IT FOR YEARS. I NEED HELP JUST AS MUCH AS YOU.
...OKAY, PROBABLY ***MORE***. I'LL BE YOUR PATRON.
FOR A WHILE. JUST 'TIL I CAN STAND ON MY OWN. DEAL?
DONE. BY THE WAY, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MOST OF MY PATRONS END UP ***DEAD*** OR ***INSANE***.
NOT SURPRISING.

WELL, LET'S HAVE A DRINK TO CELEBRATE. I KEEP A SUPPLY OF MY FAVORITE TIPPLE FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCA... UH-OH.
WHAT?

DAMN IT! THAT DRINK WILL HAVE TO WAIT! THERE'S SOMETHING FAR MORE PRESSING AT HAND!

I'M OUT OF VAMPIRE TEETH.

#4

a drink of blood

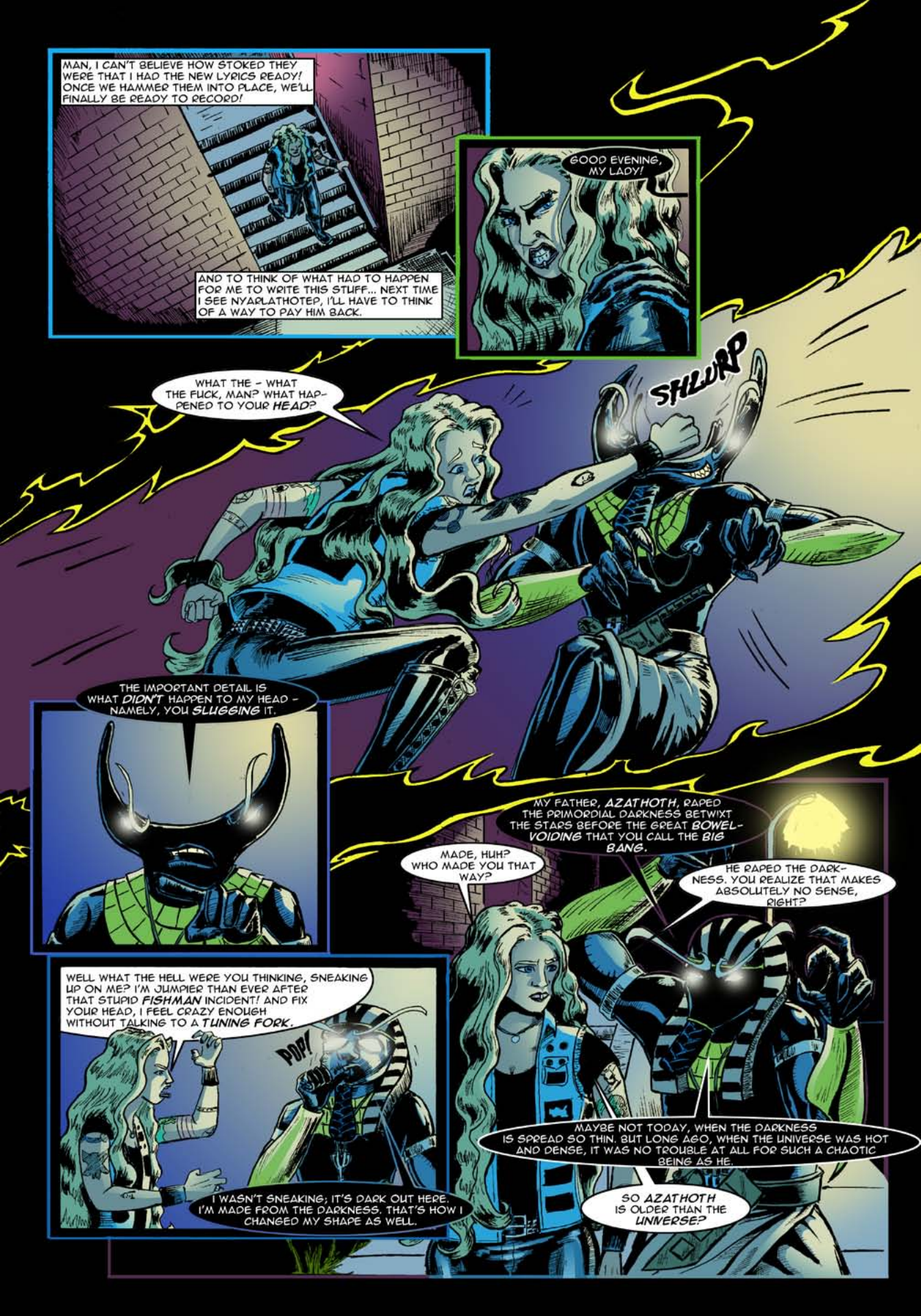
STORY AND ART BY RUSSELL JACKSON
NYARLATHOTEP CREATED BY H. P. LOVECRAFT

HELLO?
I'M SORRY, I MUST HAVE THE WRONG ADDRESS; THIS IS CLEARLY A PIXIE DEN.
STOP SAYING "TOTS." AND "BRO."
WHA? NAH, BRO, I'M TOTS A VAMP. CHECK OUT THE FANGAGE. I WILL TOTS GO LESTAT ON YOU, BRO.
WHATEVS, BRO.
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY YOUNG, SO MAYBE YOU NEED AN INTRODUCTION.
YOU HAPPEN TO BE THREATENING NYARLATHOTEP, THE CRAWLING CHAOS, SON OF AZATHOTH AND MESSENGER AND SOUL OF THE OUTER GODS!!!
...WHO?
OH, EXCUSE ME, THOSE ARE MY FORMAL TITLES. AMONGST THE VAMPIRE WORLD I AM OFTEN CALLED...
THE JAW-RIPPER!!!
THE... JAW-RIPPER? WHAT IS THAT, LIKE A MONSTER TRUCK?
NEVER HEARD OF IT, BRO.
Dracs Blood Ribbon
NEVER HEARD OF IT?! YOU MEAN...
THEY FORGOT ABOUT ME???!!!
CCH. GUESS SO. SUCKS FOR YOU, BRO.
OH, IT SUCKS, ALRIGHT! AND IT'S REALLY GOING TO SUCK FOR YOU...

...BECAUSE NOW I'VE GOT A REPUTATION TO RECLAIM! WANT A HINT WHY THEY GAVE ME THAT STUPID NICKNAME?
AAAAAAAAUUUUUUGGG!!!
SORRY ABOUT THE MESS, 'BRO,' BUT THAT PESKY MANDIBLE TENDS TO GET IN THE WAY WHEN YOU NEED TO REMOVE TEETH FROM THE TOP ROW!
DON'T WORRY, I'VE DONE THIS A THOUSAND TIMES...
...AND IT NEVER HURTS ME A BIT!
GAAAK!!
NOW... I ASSUME YOUR MASTERS ARE OUT, OR THEY'D HAVE COME RUNNING. DON'T WORRY; THEY'LL KNOW WHO I AM. SOON, YOUR ENTIRE PATHETIC BROOD WILL KNOW AGAIN!
BUT, JUST IN CASE THEY DON'T QUITE GET IT...

WE MUST PREPARE FOR *WAR*, MY CHILDREN.

THE *BLACK ONE* HAS RETURNED.


MAN, I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW STOKED THEY WERE THAT I HAD THE NEW LYRICS READY! ONCE WE HAMMER THEM INTO PLACE, WE'LL FINALLY BE READY TO RECORD!
AND TO THINK OF WHAT HAD TO HAPPEN FOR ME TO WRITE THIS STUFF... NEXT TIME I SEE NYARLATHOTEP, I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF A WAY TO PAY HIM BACK.
GOOD EVENING, MY LADY!
WHAT THE – WHAT THE FUCK, MAN? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HEAD?
SHLURP
THE IMPORTANT DETAIL IS WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN TO MY HEAD – NAMELY, YOU SLUGGING IT.
MY FATHER, AZATHOTH, RAPED THE PRIMORDIAL DARKNESS BETWIXT THE STARS BEFORE THE GREAT BOWEL-VOIDING THAT YOU CALL THE BIG BANG.
MADE, HUH? WHO MADE YOU THAT WAY?
HE RAPED THE DARKNESS. YOU REALIZE THAT MAKES ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE, RIGHT?
WELL WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING, SNEAKING UP ON ME? I'M JUMPIER THAN EVER AFTER THAT STUPID FISHMAN INCIDENT! AND FIX YOUR HEAD, I FEEL CRAZY ENOUGH WITHOUT TALKING TO A TUNING FORK.
POP!
I WASN'T SNEAKING; IT'S DARK OUT HERE. I'M MADE FROM THE DARKNESS. THAT'S HOW I CHANGED MY SHAPE AS WELL.
MAYBE NOT TODAY, WHEN THE DARKNESS IS SPREAD SO THIN. BUT LONG AGO, WHEN THE UNIVERSE WAS HOT AND DENSE, IT WAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL FOR SUCH A CHAOTIC BEING AS HE.
SO AZATHOTH IS OLDER THAN THE UNIVERSE?

AZATHOTH IS OLDER THAN EVERY UNIVERSE, AND TRANSCENDS THEM ALL. THEY REVOLVE AROUND HIS FORMLESS BULK, WHICH ROILS AND BURPS AT THE CENTER OF ALL THINGS.
I WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO ELABORATE ON THAT SO IT MAKES ANY SENSE AT ALL, BUT I DON'T HAVE ALL NIGHT. I HAVE TO GO HOME.
AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO THERE?
WELL, I'VE GOT A PAPER TO WRITE ON HAWTHORNE. SO I'LL BE DOING MY USUAL STUDY ROUTINE:
PLAY MUSIC AT A RIDICULOUS VOLUME, THEN WORK AND DRINK UNTIL I GET SO INTO ONE I FORGET ABOUT THE OTHER.
WRONG! WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING TO HAPPEN IS, YOU'RE GOING OUT!
TO A GOTH CLUB!
I WILL GLADLY GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN THE STUPIDITY OF THAT STATEMENT WHEN I'M NOT SO PRESSED FOR TIME. I'M LEAVING NOW, THANKS.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN OUR AGREEMENT SO SOON? I SAVED YOUR SKIN FROM DAGON!
AND, I WILL CONTINUE KEEPING BACK THE BIG SCARY THINGS BEYOND YOUR KEN, IN RETURN FOR WHICH YOU MUST HELP ME FURTHER MY AGENDA OF CHAOS. I NEED YOUR HELP. I NEED VAMPIRE TEETH.

SO THERE ARE REAL VAMPIRES?
IS THAT SO HARD TO BELIEVE? THERE'S A REAL ME!
POINT TAKEN. BUT WHY DO YOU NEED MY HELP? YOU JUST KO'D A BABYLONIAN SEA-GOD SINGLE-HANDEDLY. I SHOULD THINK YOU'D BE ABLE TO HANDLE A BUNCH OF OVERGROWN MOSQUITOS.
OH, NO QUESTION. AND THEY ARE EXACTLY THAT ANNOYING.
BUT I NEED TO FIND THEM. I NEED YOUR LIVING BLOOD TO DRAW THEM OUT.
THAT MAKES ME FEEL LEAGUES BETTER ABOUT THE SITUATION. BUT CAN'T YOU JUST MAKE THE SHADOWS TELL YOU WHERE THEY ARE, OR SOMETHING?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS. THE SHADOWS CAN'T TALK.
I'M SORRY. PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR NOT UNDERSTANDING HOW A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY LIKE LIVING SHADOWS ACTUALLY WORKS.
YOU'RE FORGIVEN. BUT YOU DO HAVE AN OBLIGATION. I REQUIRE YOUR HELP.
...WHAT DO YOU NEED THE STUPID TEETH FOR, ANYWAY?
IT'S DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE TO THE... UNINITIATED. IT WILL BE EASIER FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND IF I SHOW YOU ONCE I HAVE THEM.
RIGHT. AND THIS IS GOING TO FURTHER YOUR 'AGENDA OF CHAOS'?
IT WILL BE... SUFFICIENT.

MAN, SOMEONE SHOULD TELL ***INKUBUS-WHOEVER*** THAT THEY CAN ACTUALLY ***CHANGE*** THE SETTINGS ON THEIR DRUM MACHINE.

NYARLY SAID I'D KNOW WHO I'M LOOKING FOR WHEN I SAW THEM, BUT I'VE BEEN HERE FOR ***TWO HOURS***, SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WEARING ***CORSETS*** AND ***LIBERTY SPIKES***, AND I HAVEN'T FOUND A SINGLE PERSON WHO ***STANDS OUT*** FROM THE CROWD...

...WAIT, WHAT'S THIS?

I DON'T KNOW IF I'M LOOKING FOR ***HIM***, BUT HE'S SURE FIXATED ON ***ME***. ARE THOSE FANGS FOR SHOW, OR IS HE THE REAL DEAL?

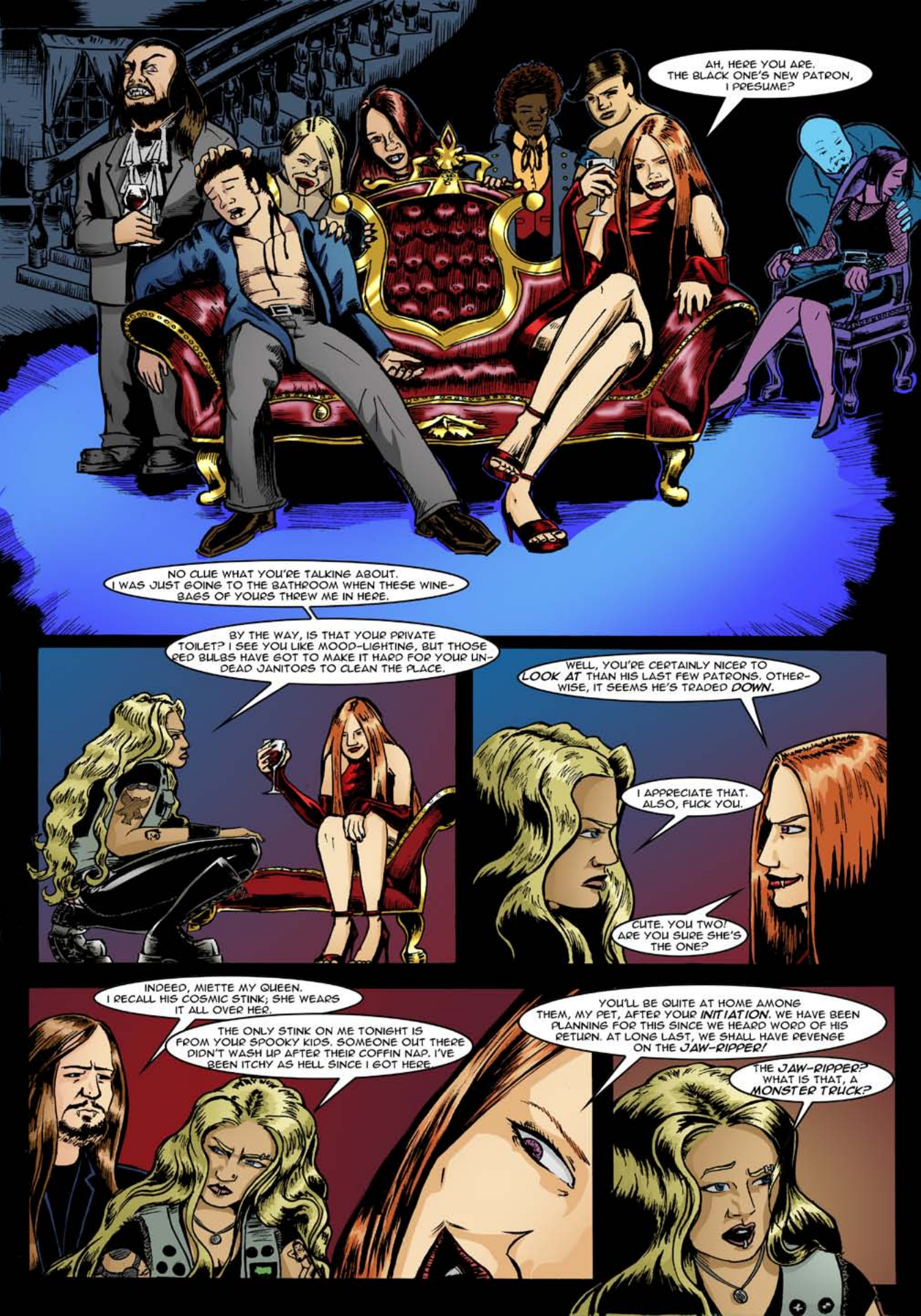
NYARLY SAID TO LURE THEM OUT... LET'S SEE IF HE FOLLOWS ME OUTSIDE.

OH BOY. TIME TO HIT UP THE LADIES' ROOM AND REGROUP. WHERE THE HELL IS NYARLATHOTEP?

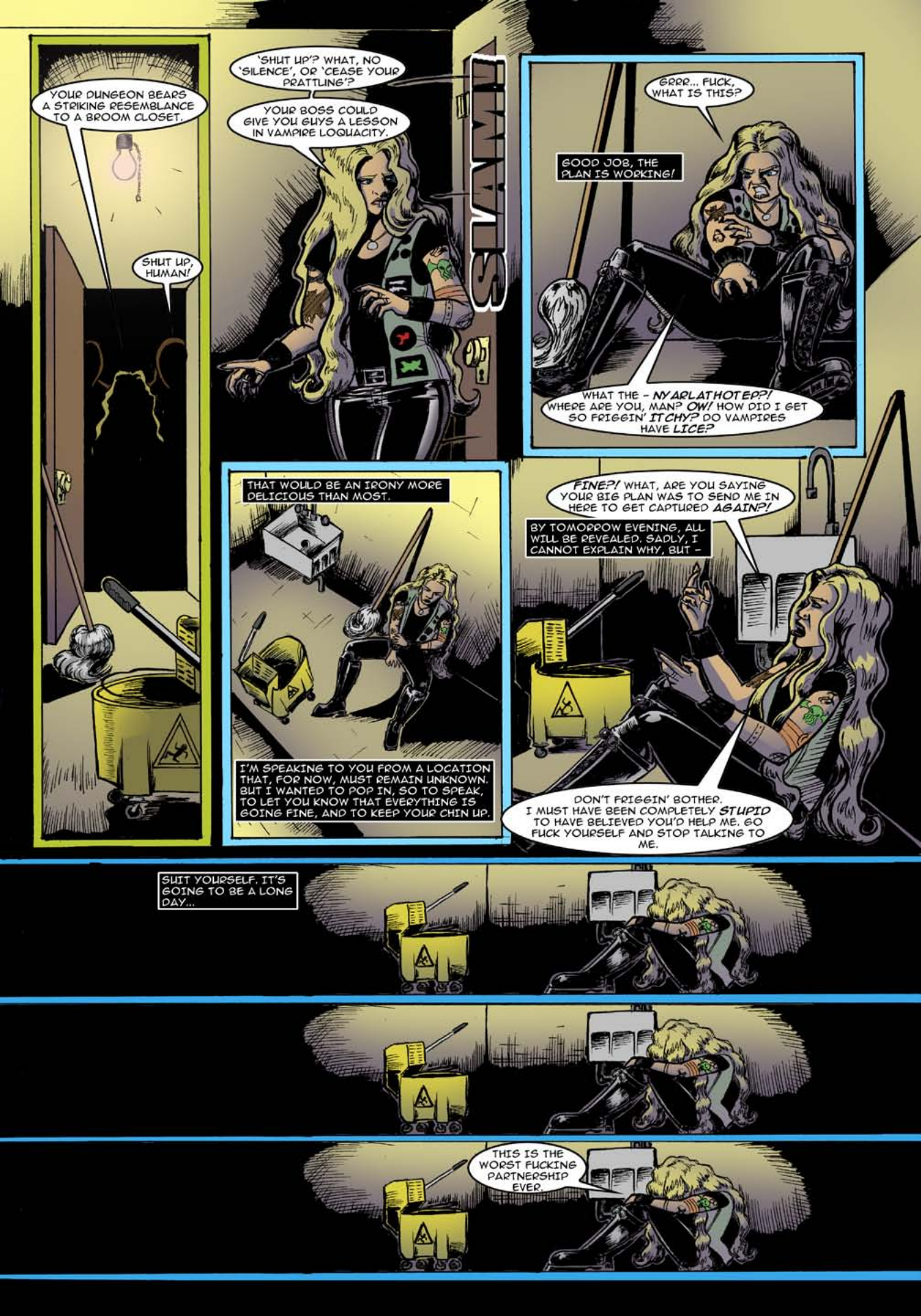
HEY, WHAT THE FUCK?! GET OFF OF ME!

UUUUNGH!!!

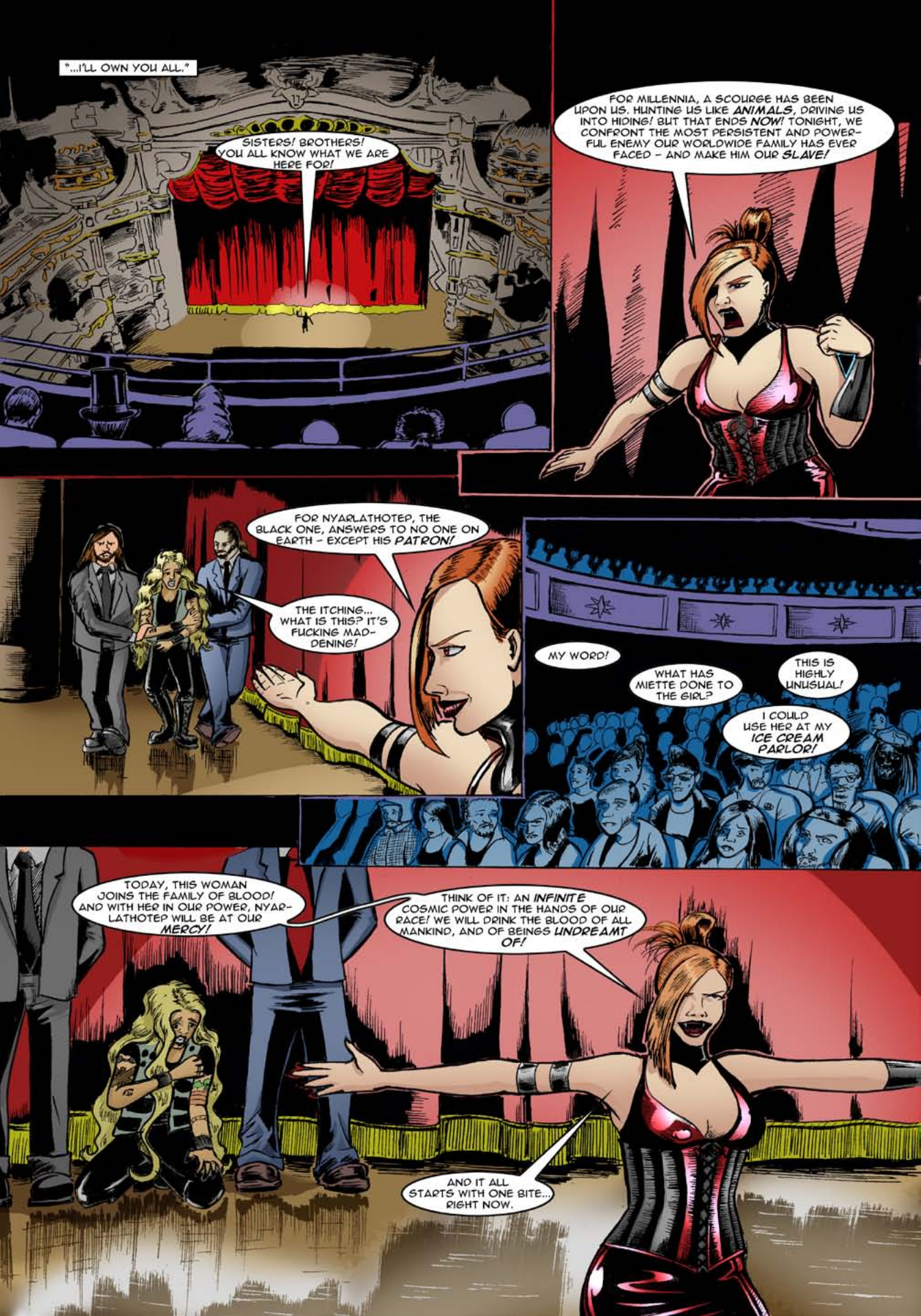
SKLAM


AH, HERE YOU ARE. THE BLACK ONE'S NEW PATRON, I PRESUME?
NO CLUE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I WAS JUST GOING TO THE BATHROOM WHEN THESE WINE-BAGS OF YOURS THREW ME IN HERE.
BY THE WAY, IS THAT YOUR PRIVATE TOILET? I SEE YOU LIKE MOOD-LIGHTING, BUT THOSE RED BULBS HAVE GOT TO MAKE IT HARD FOR YOUR UN-DEAD JANITORS TO CLEAN THE PLACE.
WELL, YOU'RE CERTAINLY NICER TO LOOK AT THAN HIS LAST FEW PATRONS. OTHER-WISE, IT SEEMS HE'S TRADED DOWN.
I APPRECIATE THAT. ALSO, FUCK YOU.
CUTE. YOU TWO! ARE YOU SURE SHE'S THE ONE?
INDEED, MIETTE MY QUEEN. I RECALL HIS COSMIC STINK; SHE WEARS IT ALL OVER HER.
THE ONLY STINK ON ME TONIGHT IS FROM YOUR SPOOKY KIDS. SOMEONE OUT THERE DIDN'T WASH UP AFTER THEIR COFFIN NAP. I'VE BEEN ITCHY AS HELL SINCE I GOT HERE.
YOU'LL BE QUITE AT HOME AMONG THEM, MY PET, AFTER YOUR INITIATION. WE HAVE BEEN PLANNING FOR THIS SINCE WE HEARD WORD OF HIS RETURN. AT LONG LAST, WE SHALL HAVE REVENGE ON THE JAW-RIPPER!
THE JAW-RIPPER? WHAT IS THAT, A MONSTER TRUCK?

"YOUR FEIGNED NAIVETE MAY COMFORT YOU NOW, DARLING, BUT THROUGH THE AGES, MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HUMILIATED AND TORMENTED FAR TOO OFTEN BY THE FOUL BLACK ONE TO JEST IN THIS MATTER.
BLOSUCKR
"HEARING OF HIS RETURN – AND NOW, OF YOUR CAPTURE – THE ELDERS FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT HAVE BEEN SUMMONED.
"AND TOMORROW NIGHT, THEY WILL WITNESS THE VENGEANCE THEY AND SO MANY OTHERS OF OUR KIND HAVE YEARNED FOR...
...AS THE BLACK ONE'S PATRON IS TAKEN INTO THE BROOD, AS A VAMPIRE! IT'S WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF, ISN'T IT, MY PET?
HELL NO, IT ISN'T... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU ARE STRONG, MY PET, BUT NO ONE IS THAT STRONG. COME, GAZE INTO MY EYES, AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE!
OKAY. I SEE A WOMAN WHO LOOKS LIKE A SUICIDE GIRLS' DEN MOTHER. HAPPY?
VILE CREATURE! CONFINE HER UNDERGROUND UNTIL THE ELDERS ARRIVE!
WE'LL SEE HOW BRAZEN SHE IS AFTER A NIGHT IN OUR DUNGEONS!
GET BENT!


YOUR DUNGEON BEARS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO A BROOM CLOSET.
SHUT UP, HUMAN!
'SHUT UP'? WHAT, NO 'SILENCE', OR 'CEASE YOUR PRATTLING'?
YOUR BOSS COULD GIVE YOU GUYS A LESSON IN VAMPIRE LOQUACITY.
SLAM!
GRRR... FUCK, WHAT IS THIS?
GOOD JOB, THE PLAN IS WORKING!
WHAT THE - NYARLATHOTEP?! WHERE ARE YOU, MAN? OW! HOW DID I GET SO FRIGGIN' ITCHY? DO VAMPIRES HAVE LICE?
THAT WOULD BE AN IRONY MORE DELICIOUS THAN MOST.
I'M SPEAKING TO YOU FROM A LOCATION THAT, FOR NOW, MUST REMAIN UNKNOWN. BUT I WANTED TO POP IN, SO TO SPEAK, TO LET YOU KNOW THAT EVERYTHING IS GOING FINE, AND TO KEEP YOUR CHIN UP.
FINE?! WHAT, ARE YOU SAYING YOUR BIG PLAN WAS TO SEND ME IN HERE TO GET CAPTURED AGAIN?!
BY TOMORROW EVENING, ALL WILL BE REVEALED. SADLY, I CANNOT EXPLAIN WHY, BUT -
DON'T FRIGGIN' BOTHER. I MUST HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY STUPID TO HAVE BELIEVED YOU'D HELP ME. GO FUCK YOURSELF AND STOP TALKING TO ME.
SUIT YOURSELF. IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG DAY...
THIS IS THE WORST FUCKING PARTNERSHIP EVER.

THE NEXT EVENING...
JONAS, HOW IS THE BLOOD DRIVE GOING?
WONDERFUL, WE'RE FEEDING HUNDREDS!
DONALD, STILL RUNNING PROTECTION AGAINST SLAYERS?
ANNEMARIE, HAVING SUCCESS WITH YOUR PRIVATE INVESTIGATION FIRM?
MAURICE, HOW IS THE ICE CREAM PARLOR?
STEVEN, DIANA, HOW LOVELY TO SEE YOU! WHAT NEWS DO YOU BRING OF THE NEW ENGLAND COVENS?
SPARE US THE SMALL TALK, MIETTE. COMING ALL THE WAY OUT TO THIS DISMAL BACKWATER TO WITNESS OUR REVENGE ON THE BLACK ONE IS BAD ENOUGH.
BUT YOUR TRANSPARENT ATTEMPTS TO INGRATIATE YOURSELF WITH THOSE OF US WHO HAVE STATUS ARE JUST PATHETIC.
WELL. WE SHALL SEE WHO IS FAWNING TO WHOM ONCE I BECOME INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN FOR TURNING THE BLACK ONE'S PATRON.
YOU MIDWESTERNERS ARE POSITIVELY ADORABLE, WITH YOUR LITTLE DREAMS AND AMBITIONS. ENJOY ALL OF YOUR SPARKLY CHILDREN, MIETTE! COME ALONG, STEPHEN.
YOU WERE ALWAYS POWERFUL, DIANA. BUT NEVER VERY GOOD AT HIDING YOUR FEAR. AFTER TONIGHT, I'LL OWN YOU...


"...I'LL OWN YOU ALL."
SISTERS! BROTHERS! YOU ALL KNOW WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR!
FOR MILLENNIA, A SCOURGE HAS BEEN UPON US. HUNTING US LIKE ANIMALS, DRIVING US INTO HIDING! BUT THAT ENDS NOW! TONIGHT, WE CONFRONT THE MOST PERSISTENT AND POWERFUL ENEMY OUR WORLDWIDE FAMILY HAS EVER FACED - AND MAKE HIM OUR SLAVE!
FOR NYARLATHOTEP, THE BLACK ONE, ANSWERS TO NO ONE ON EARTH - EXCEPT HIS PATRON!
THE ITCHING... WHAT IS THIS? IT'S FUCKING MADDENING!
MY WORD!
WHAT HAS MIETTE DONE TO THE GIRL?
THIS IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL!
I COULD USE HER AT MY ICE CREAM PARLOR!
TODAY, THIS WOMAN JOINS THE FAMILY OF BLOOD! AND WITH HER IN OUR POWER, NYARLATHOTEP WILL BE AT OUR MERCY!
THINK OF IT: AN INFINITE COSMIC POWER IN THE HANDS OF OUR RACE! WE WILL DRINK THE BLOOD OF ALL MANKIND, AND OF BEINGS UNDREAMT OF!
AND IT ALL STARTS WITH ONE BITE... RIGHT NOW.

YOU SEEM TO BE CURED OF YOUR ITCH, MY PET. COULD IT BE THE ANTICIPATION, THE FEAR?
THAT WILL PASS. TELL ME – HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY, IN YOUR LAST MOMENTS OF HUMANITY?
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DO!
WHAT?!
GIVE ME...
...YOUR FUCKING...
...TEETH!!!
WELCOME, ONE AND ALL, TO WHAT IS ABOUT TO BECOME THE LARGEST AND FASTEST GATHERING OF DENTAL SPECIMENS IN EARTH'S HISTORY!

A THOUSAND LITTLE BLOODSUCKERS, ALL IN A ROW. I HOPE YOU'VE ALL ENJOYED YOUR AFTERLIVES. THEY MIGHT'VE LASTED LONGER IF YOU'D BEEN *MUMMIFIED* INSTEAD OF VAMPIRIZED, BUT HEY, NOT EVERYONE GETS A SECOND CHANCE, RIGHT?
BRETHREN, SISTREN, RISE! HE CANNOT DEFEAT US ALL TOGETHER!
SO MANY MOSQUITOS...
...LUCKILY I BROUGHT MY *BUG-ZAPPER!*
SHRAAK!

SNAP OUT OF IT, LUCIE! TIME TO SET-TLE SOME ACCOUNTS!
HEY, METTE.
...I'M NOT YOUR FREAKING 'PET' FOR HEMATO-PHAGIC BITCH!
SHIT... HEY, MYKELTI, ALREADY! YOU GIVE ME ONE TIME, PAL!
WITH ALISTO HERE TO ID!
SEMPER FUNE FUCKER...
...IS BEST DONE THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY!
WHOA!!!
FUCKING AI!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
...THIS CALLS FOR JUST THE RIGHT MUSIC!
HOLD ON... WAIT A MINUTE... HOLD ON...
....THERE, PERFECT!
BOLT THROWER!
SSSSKZZZATTT!!!
KKKRRUUUNCH
SCHLORP

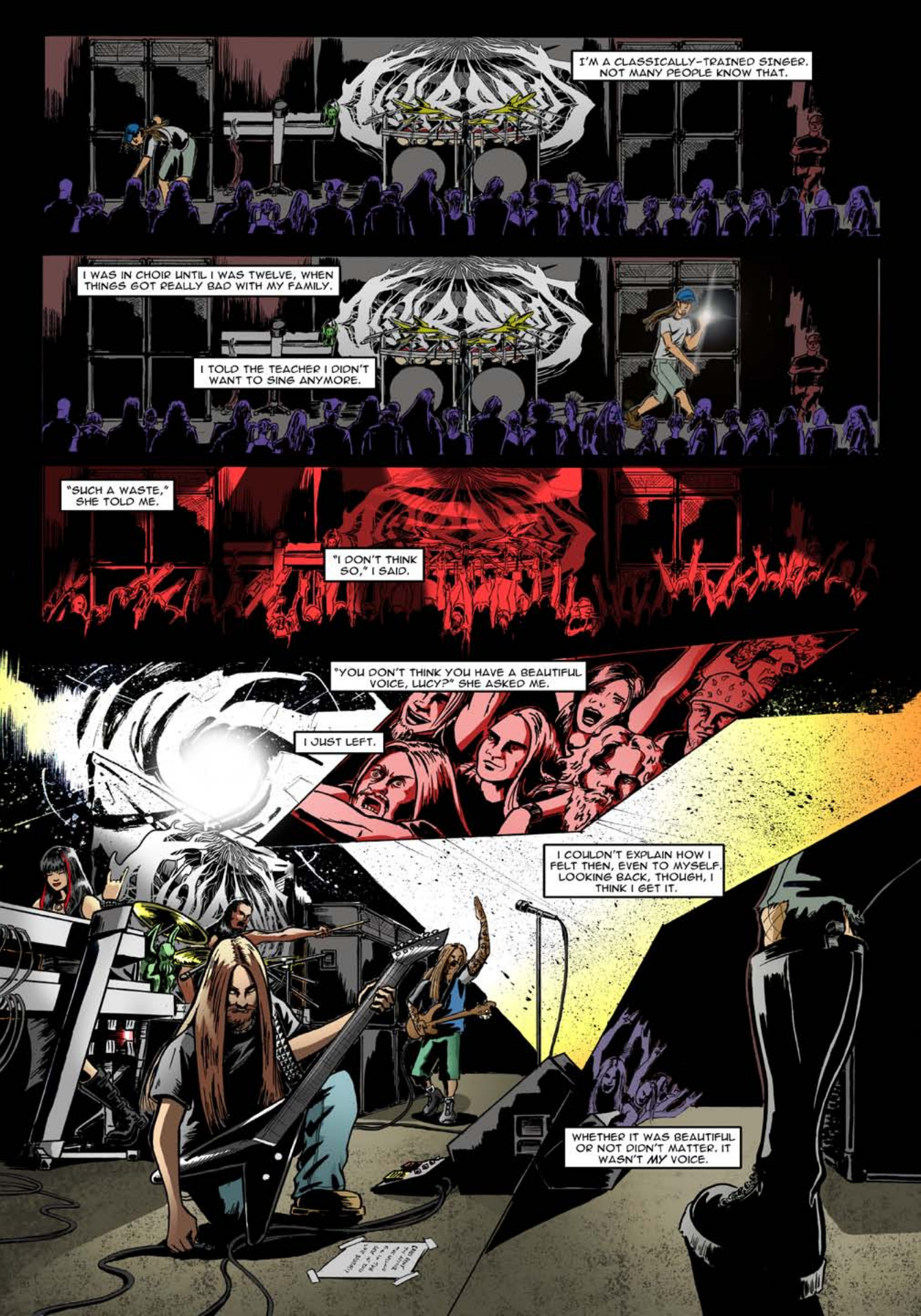
THANKS FOR THE RIDE, BUDDY! I'VE GOT TO TALK TO ONE OF THESE BLOOD SUCKERS!
YOU FREAKS ARE PATHETIC! IF IT WASN'T BAD ENOUGH THAT YOU BICKER AND SQUABBLE UNDER THE PRETENSE OF BEING SOME KIND OF UNDEAD ARISTOCRACY, NOW YOU... YOU SPARKLE!
I'VE HAD IT. I AM OFFICIALLY DEMOTING ALL OF YOU FROM THE WORLD OF HORROR, TO THAT OF...
TEEN PARANORMAL ROMANCE!!!
NOOOOOOO!!!!!
WAIT, WHA–
baaaHaHaHaHaHaHa!!!!

EXIT
I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU ONE DAY, YOU CRUDE, WICKED CREATURE.
EXIT
ONE DAY.
DON'T WORRY, YA WORM. I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU ALIVE, BECAUSE I NEED WORD TO GET AROUND; THE BLACK ONE HAS RETURNED, AND DID NOT APPRECIATE BEING FORGOTTEN BY HIS QUARRY.
BUT, NOW THAT I'VE SLAUGHTERED THE ENTIRE NORTH AMERICAN VAMPIRE ARISTOCRACY IN A SINGLE NIGHT, THAT SHOULDN'T BE A PROB-LEM ANYMORE...
...SHOULD IT?
SNAP!

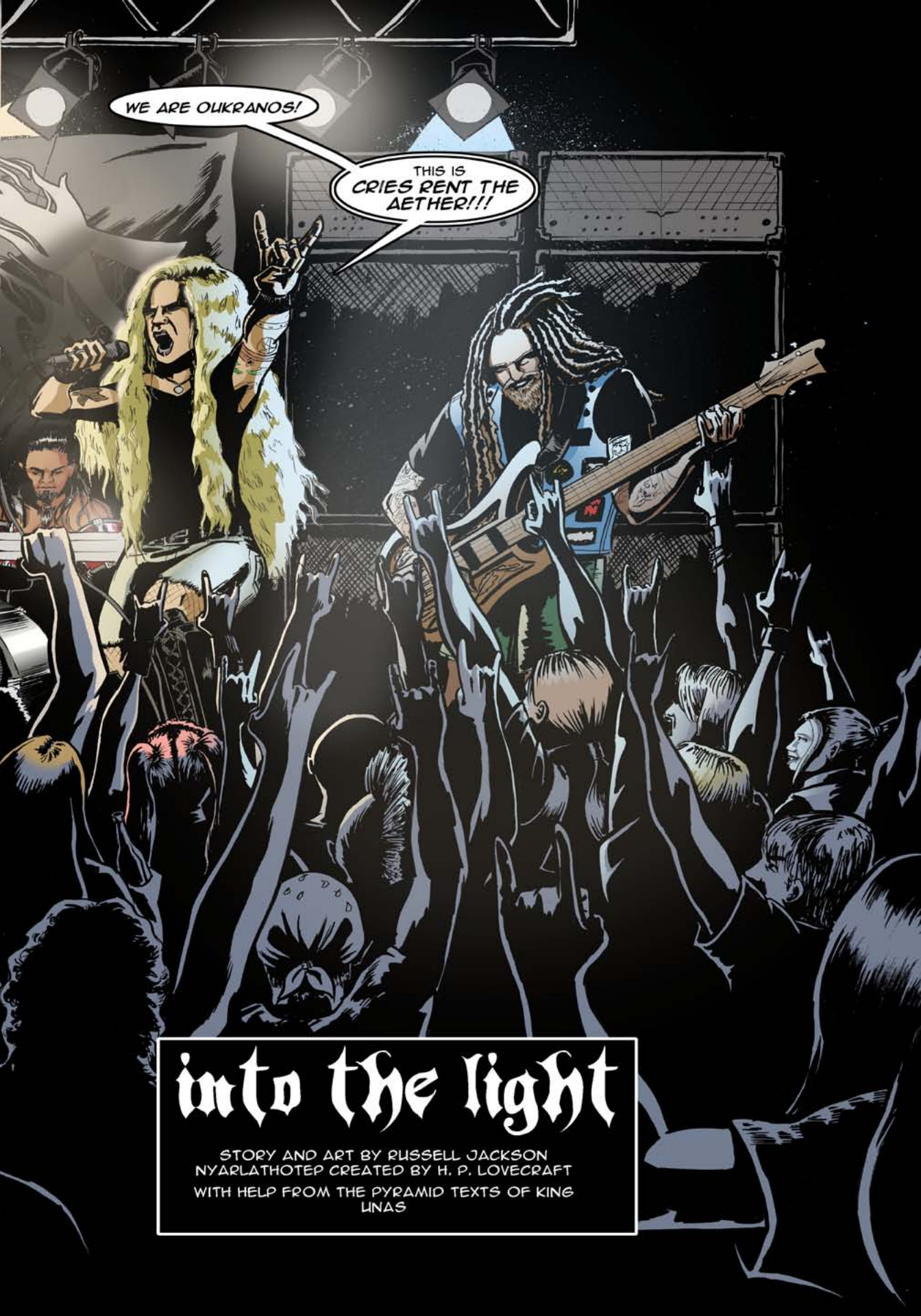
SO, DOES THAT HYPNOTIC GAZE THING OF THEIRS REALLY WORK?
YEAH, IF YOU'RE A FUCKING BUFFOON.
YOU HAVE TO WANT IT TO WORK. COMPLETE PLACEBO EFFECT.
HERE, NOW THAT THE WHOLE VAMPIRE MESS IS TAKEN CARE OF, LET'S HAVE THAT DRINK I PROMISED AFTER I TROUNCED DAGON.
THANKS. NOW, I JUST SPENT AN ENTIRE DAY IN A VAMPIRE'S BROOM DUNGEON FOR YOUR STUPID TEETH. WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT THE HELL THEY'RE FOR?
CERTAINLY. HOW'S YOUR TEA?
WOW; THAT'S EXCELLENT, MAN! WHAT'S IT MADE OF?
THAT'S IT.
...WHAT'S IT?
THE TEETH. THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE FOR. THAT'S WHY THIS DRINK HAD TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER WE ANNIHILATED THE VAMPIRES. THE TEA IS MADE OUT OF FINELY-GROUND VAMPIRE FANGS.
DELICIOUS, ISN'T IT?

SPPPFFFFFF!
ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?!??!? I JUST WENT THROUGH ALL THAT BULLSHIT SO YOU COULD HAVE SOME FREAKING TEA? THIS HAS GOT TO BE A GODDAMN JOKE!!!
THAT TEA WAS NO JOKE, YOU TASTED IT YOURSELF. AND YOU JUST WASTED IT, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
SCREW YOU, MAN! FORGET THIS. I'D RATHER BE DEVOURED BY YOG-SOTHOTH ON MY OWN TERMS THAN SPEND ANOTHER SECOND RISKING MY NECK TO HELP YOU SCORE LUXURY ITEMS. GOOD-FRIGGIN'-BYE, ASSHOLE!
WELL...
SO MUCH FOR MY PLAN FOR WERE-WOLF BAKLAVAS!

#5

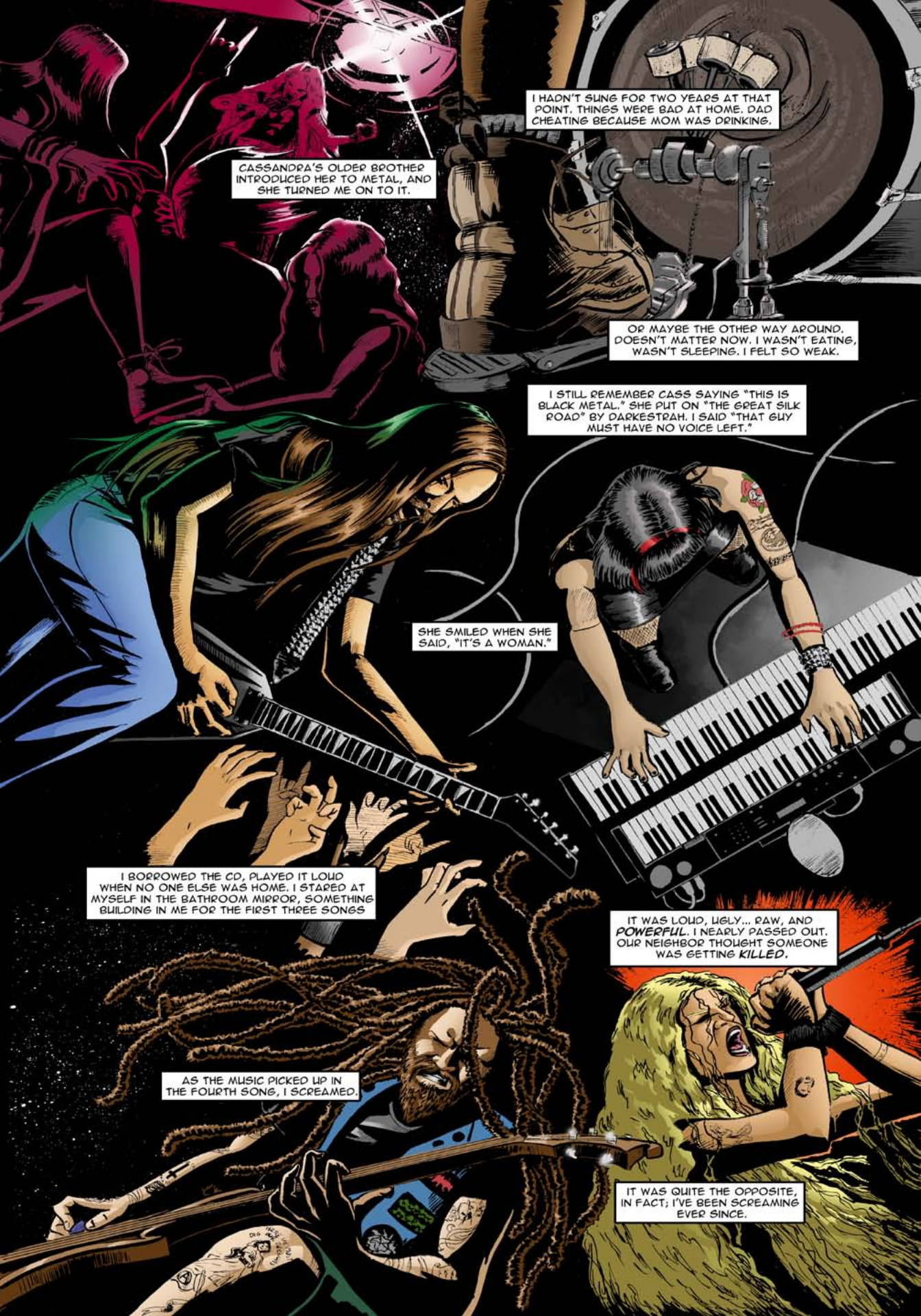

I'M A CLASSICALLY-TRAINED SINGER. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THAT.
I WAS IN CHOIR UNTIL I WAS TWELVE, WHEN THINGS GOT REALLY BAD WITH MY FAMILY.
I TOLD THE TEACHER I DIDN'T WANT TO SING ANYMORE.
"SUCH A WASTE," SHE TOLD ME.
"I DON'T THINK SO," I SAID.
"YOU DON'T THINK YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL VOICE, LUCY?" SHE ASKED ME.
I JUST LEFT.
I COULDN'T EXPLAIN HOW I FELT THEN, EVEN TO MYSELF. LOOKING BACK, THOUGH, I THINK I GET IT.
WHETHER IT WAS BEAUTIFUL OR NOT DIDN'T MATTER. IT WASN'T *MY* VOICE.

THIS IS MY VOICE.
AND THE UGLIER, THE BETTER.



into the light

STORY AND ART BY RUSSELL JACKSON
NYARLATHOTEP CREATED BY H. P. LOVECRAFT
WITH HELP FROM THE PYRAMID TEXTS OF KING UNAS

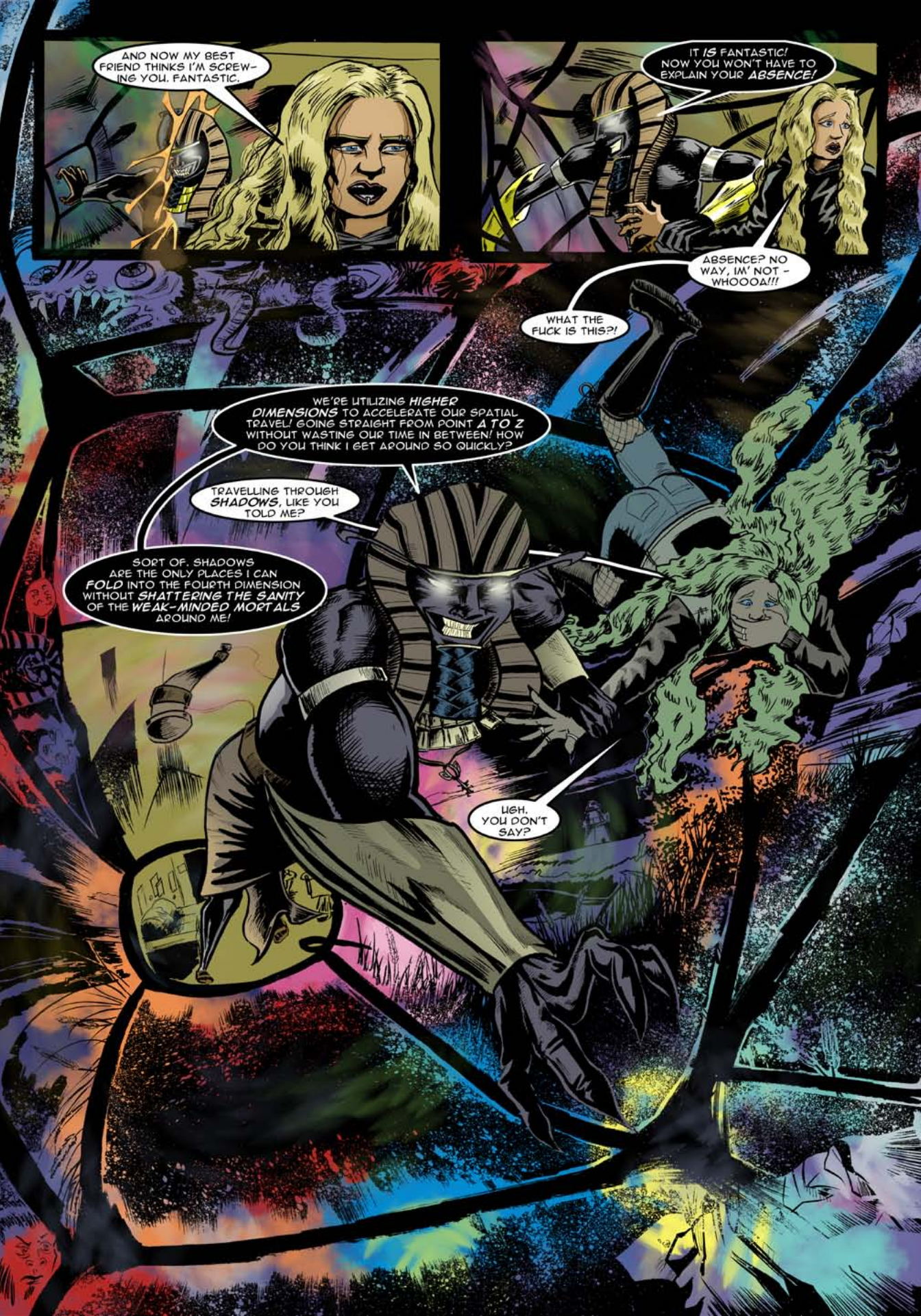

CASSANDRA'S OLDER BROTHER INTRODUCED HER TO METAL, AND SHE TURNED ME ON TO IT.
I HADN'T SUNG FOR TWO YEARS AT THAT POINT. THINGS WERE BAD AT HOME. DAD CHEATING BECAUSE MOM WAS DRINKING.
OR MAYBE THE OTHER WAY AROUND. DOESN'T MATTER NOW. I WASN'T EATING, WASN'T SLEEPING. I FELT SO WEAK.
I STILL REMEMBER CASS SAYING "THIS IS BLACK METAL." SHE PUT ON "THE GREAT SILK ROAD" BY DARKESTRAH. I SAID "THAT GUY MUST HAVE NO VOICE LEFT."
SHE SMILED WHEN SHE SAID, "IT'S A WOMAN."
I BORROWED THE CD, PLAYED IT LOUD WHEN NO ONE ELSE WAS HOME. I STARED AT MYSELF IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR, SOMETHING BUILDING IN ME FOR THE FIRST THREE SONGS
IT WAS LOUD, UGLY... RAW, AND POWERFUL. I NEARLY PASSED OUT. OUR NEIGHBOR THOUGHT SOMEONE WAS GETTING KILLED.
AS THE MUSIC PICKED UP IN THE FOURTH SONG, I SCREAMED.
IT WAS QUITE THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT; I'VE BEEN SCREAMING EVER SINCE.

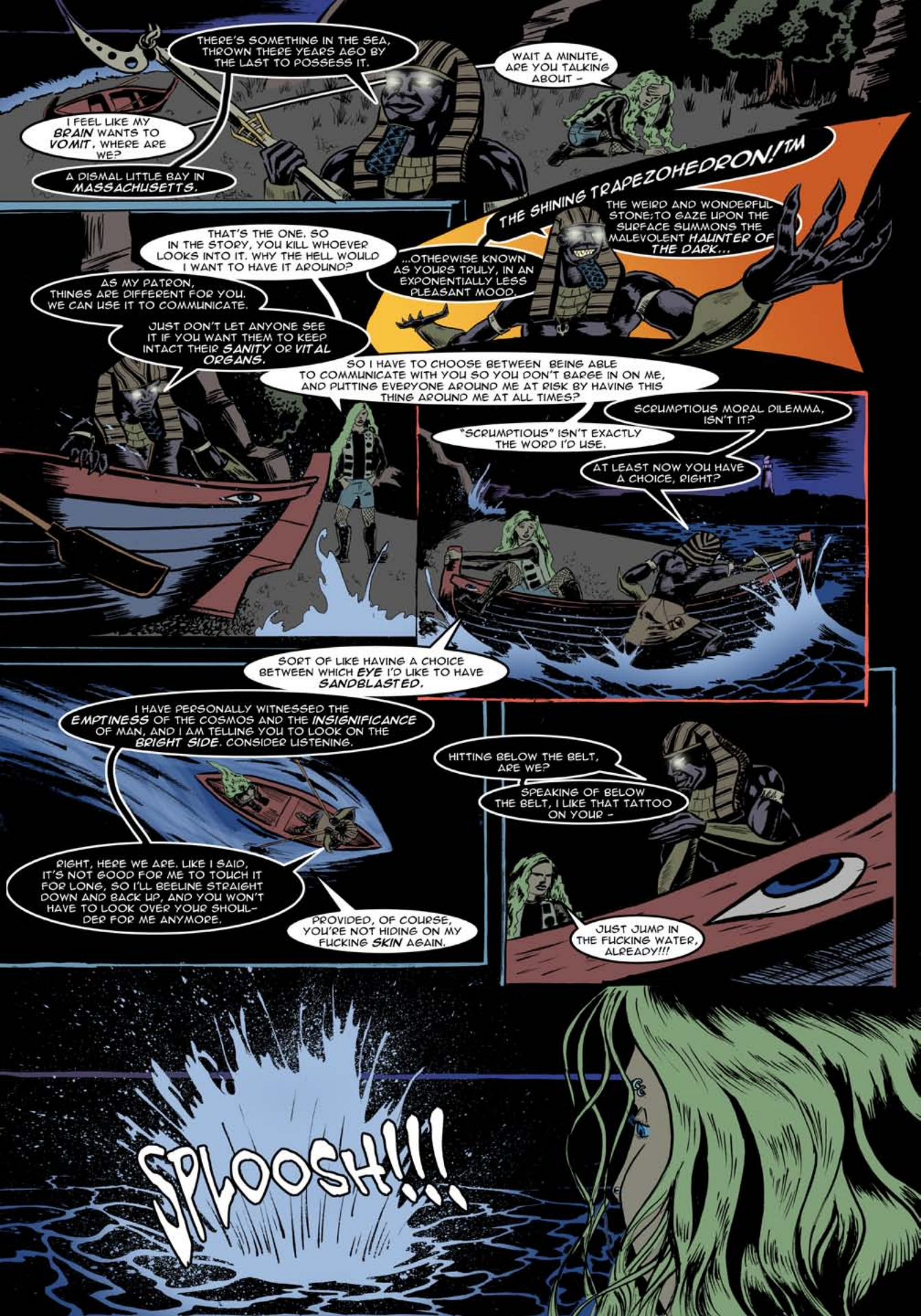
THESE PEOPLE – MOSTLY KIDS – HAVE THEY FELT WEAK, LIKE I DID? POWERLESS AND UNCERTAIN?
HAVE THEY SCREAMED THEMSELVES INTO A FAINT IN FRONT OF THEIR BATHROOM MIRROR?
OR PULLED THEIR HAIR OUT AS THE FOUNDATIONS OF THEIR WORLD CRUMBLED BENEATH THEM?
OR GROWN DISILLUSIONED IN THEIR SEARCH FOR BEAUTY, FEELING MORE COMFORTABLE LASHING OUT AT THE DARKNESS?
MAYBE THEY'RE CHASING AFTER THEIR HEROES IN GUITAR MAGAZINES, WHO GAVE THEM SOMETHING TO STRIVE FOR INSTEAD OF RESIGNING THEMSELVES TO MEDIOCRITY?
MAYBE THEY WERE DISGUSTED BY THE BANALITY AND SHALLOWNESS OF A SHELTERED EXISTENCE, AND WANTED TO GET LOST IN A WALL OF SOUND THAT GAVE THEIR LIVES A NEW ENERGY, A NEW DEPTH OF FEELING?
REALLY, WE'RE ALL HERE FOR THE SAME REASON:
THE WORLD TEARS US DOWN
WE HOLD EACH OTHER UP.

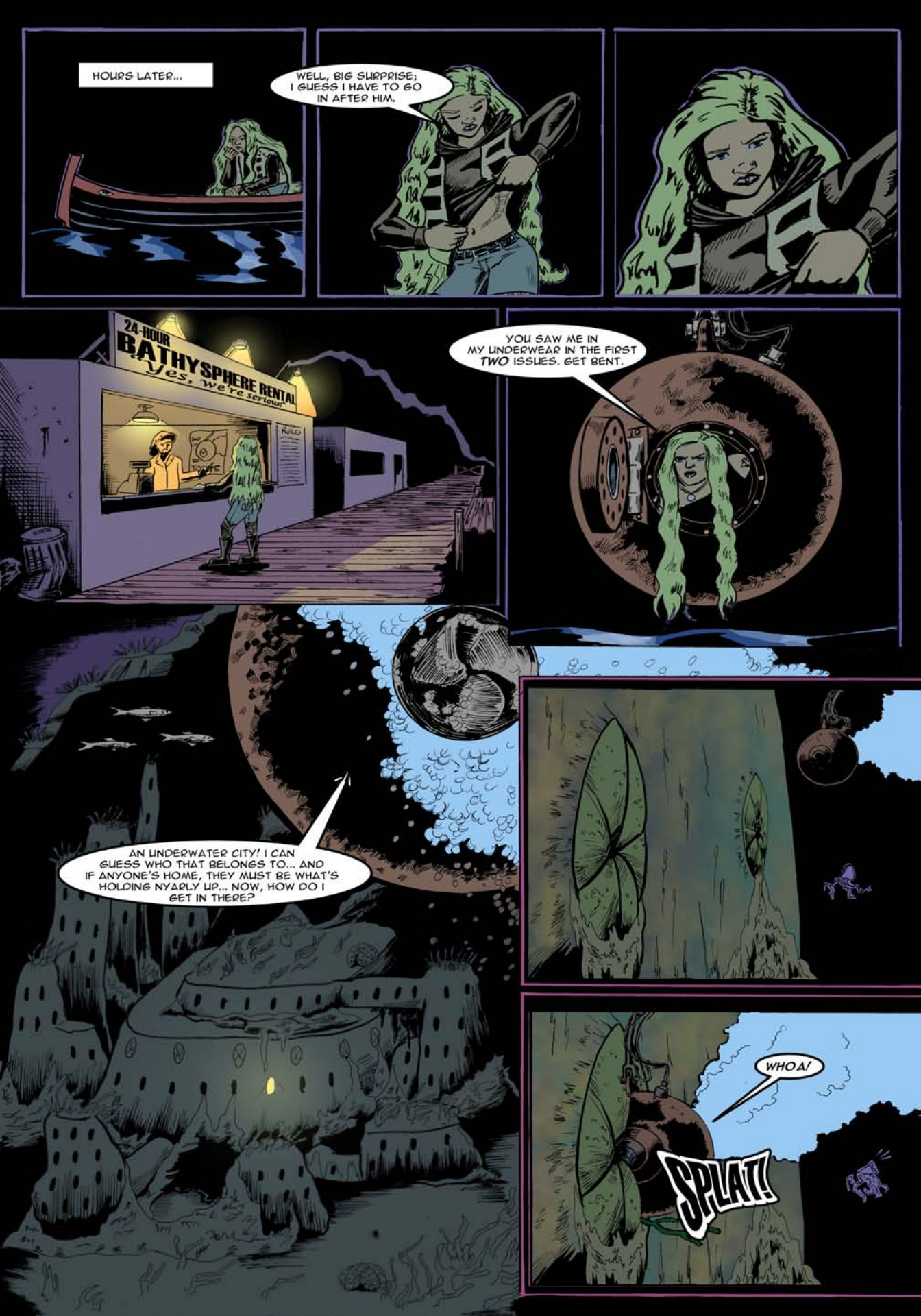
WHATEVER OUR DEMONS, WE SHARE OUT HERE WHAT THEY INFLICT ON US.
WE EMERGE FROM THE MUNDANE, AND SEE OUR EXISTENCE IS SO MUCH MORE THAN THE SUM OF OUR DIFFICULTIES.
WE SHOVE AND SCREAM AND HATE TOGETHER, AND AFTERWARD, OUR PAIN IS GONE, AND WE REALIZE HOW HAPPY WE ARE TO BE SO ALIVE.
SO REALLY, SO TRULY, *ALIVE*.
BUT, HEY, WHAT DO I KNOW?
MAYBE WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF LOW-BROW PRIMITIVES MAKING NOISE.

THAT WAS A GREAT SHOW. I CAN SEE WHY YOU GUYS ARE SO POPULAR.
HEY, THANKS MAN, I –
OH. IT'S YOU.
WOULD IT HELP IF I STARTED WITH AN APOLOGY?
IT WOULD HELP EVEN MORE IF YOU STARTED ON YOUR WAY *OUT*.
I APOLOGIZE FOR PUTTING YOUR LIFE IN DANGER WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE.
THANK YOU.
BETTER NOW?
NO. FUCK OFF.
I HATE TO BE CRUDE, BUT WE DO HAVE A CONTRACT OF SORTS –
YEAH? WE'LL, I'D *LOVE* TO BE CRUDE. I'VE NEVER SEEN A COPY OF THIS FUCKING CONTRACT. IS THERE ANYTHING IN IT ABOUT LETTING ME IN ON YOUR PLANS? ABOUT WHEN AND HOW I AM SUPPOSED TO RISK MY *NECK*, AND WHAT I GET FOR IT?
SO FAR, THE MOST I HAVE TO SHOW FOR ALMOST GETTING KILLED *TWICE* HAS BEEN A CUP OF SHITTY TEA MADE FROM VAMPIRE FANGS. AND NOW YOU'VE *RUINED* TONIGHT FOR ME, WHICH WAS THE FIRST NIGHT WE PLAYED SONGS FROM OUR NEW ALBUM!
AN ALBUM YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COMPLETE WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF CONTACTING *ME*.
YOU ARE *NOT* USING THAT AGAINST ME, ASSHOLE. FUCK WHATEVER YOU'RE TRYING TO PERSUADE ME TO DO. GET OUT OF MY WAY. *NOW*.
I'M NOT HERE TO PERSUADE YOU TO DO ANYTHING. LISTEN TO ME FOR ONE MINUTE AND THEN YOU CAN STORM OFF. WE'LL SEVER ALL TIES. FOREVER. SAVVY?
...YOU REALIZE I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE YOU, RIGHT?
EXACTLY WHAT I'M HERE TO RECTIFY. I WOULD LIKE TO RETRIEVE AN ARTIFACT THAT WILL ALLOW YOU MORE CONTROL OVER WHEN AND HOW WE MEET, AND WHICH WILL LET YOU REAP GREATER BENEFITS OF MY ASSOCIATION.
SO GO RETRIEVE IT. TAKE YOUR TIME.

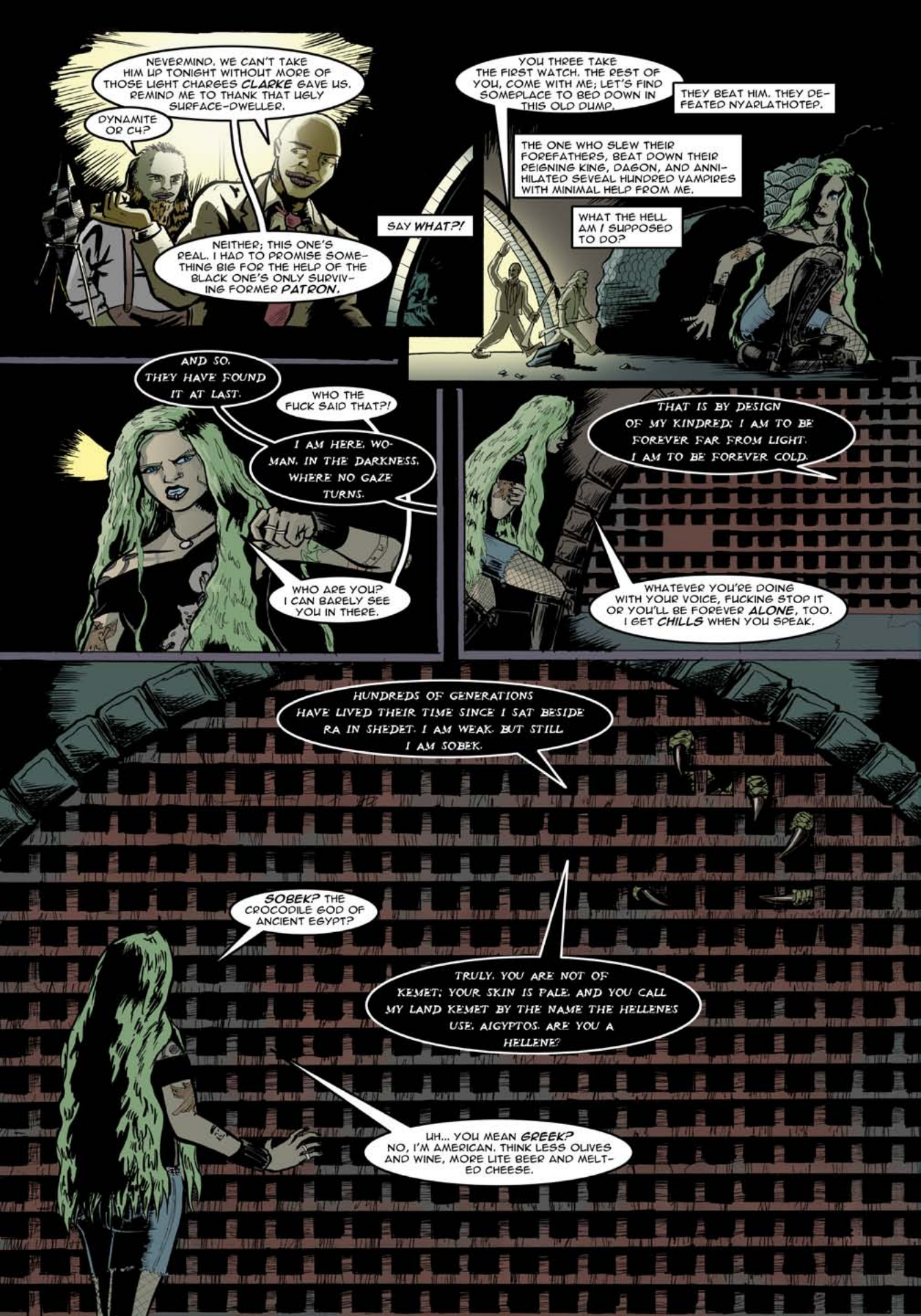
THAT'S JUST THE SNAG - I CAN'T TOUCH IT. I WILL HAVE JUST ENOUGH TIME TO GET IT TO YOU -
HOW INCREDIBLY FUCKING CONVENIENT. ONCE AGAIN, I HAVE TO GO OFF ON A HALF-COCKED PLAN TO - AH, SHIT! CASSANDRA'S COMING!
WHO?
MY KEYBOARD PLAYER, MY BEST FRIEND! SHE'S SEEN YOU; DO YOU HAVE AN ALIAS OR SOMETHING?
CALL ME "HAROLD BLACKMAN." THAT'S BEEN A RIOT THIS PAST CENTURY.
DON'T BE STUPID, NOBODY'S NAMED "HAROLD" ANYMORE.
HEY, LUCE. SORRY, AM I INTERRUPTING SOMETHING?
WHAT? OH, NO. UM, CASSANDRA, THIS IS...
EDDIE! EDDIE GRIBALN. EXCELLENT TO FINALLY MEET YOU, CASSANDRA. YOU PLAYED SPLENDIDLY TONIGHT.
THE HAUNTING ATMOSPHERES OF YOUR KEYS MADE ME FEEL I TRULY BEHELD THE PLATEAU OF LENG, OR THE GREAT BEAST, THERAGAWERUS.
YOU ARE A TRUE MISTRESS OF YOUR CRAFT.
UM, WOW, THANK YOU SO MUCH! YOU'RE QUITE A FAN, AREN'T YOU?
YOU CERTAINLY WON'T BE RID OF ME ANYTIME SOON.
WELL, THAT'S GOOD... GRIBALN, THAT'S A WEIRDLY FAMILIAR NAME. ARE YOU FROM AROUND HERE?
SO, ARE YOU GUYS ALL PACKED UP? NEED ME FOR ANYTHING?
NOPE, WE'RE DONE. YOU'RE FREE TO DO WHATEVER!
SEE YOU BOTH LATER!
(AND, IF YOU DON'T LIKE DOING 'WHATEVER,' THEN LET ME KNOW; I'D LIKE TO TAKE A CRACK AT IT!)
I'D RATHER TAKE A CRACK AT A CROWBAR WITH MY HEAD.


AND NOW MY BEST FRIEND THINKS I'M SCREWING YOU. FANTASTIC.
IT IS FANTASTIC! NOW YOU WON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN YOUR ABSENCE!
ABSENCE? NO WAY, IM' NOT - WHOOOA!!!
WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS?!
WE'RE UTILIZING HIGHER DIMENSIONS TO ACCELERATE OUR SPATIAL TRAVEL! GOING STRAIGHT FROM POINT A TO Z WITHOUT WASTING OUR TIME IN BETWEEN! HOW DO YOU THINK I GET AROUND SO QUICKLY?
TRAVELLING THROUGH SHADOWS, LIKE YOU TOLD ME?
SORT OF. SHADOWS ARE THE ONLY PLACES I CAN FOLD INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION WITHOUT SHATTERING THE SANITY OF THE WEAK-MINDED MORTALS AROUND ME!
UGH. YOU DON'T SAY?


THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE SEA, THROWN THERE YEARS AGO BY THE LAST TO POSSESS IT.
WAIT A MINUTE, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT –
I FEEL LIKE MY BRAIN WANTS TO VOMIT. WHERE ARE WE?
A DISMAL LITTLE BAY IN MASSACHUSETTS.
THE SHINING TRAPEZOHEDRON!™
THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL STONE;TO GAZE UPON THE SURFACE SUMMONS THE MALEVOLENT HAUNTER OF THE DARK...
...OTHERWISE KNOWN AS YOURS TRULY, IN AN EXPONENTIALLY LESS PLEASANT MOOD.
THAT'S THE ONE. SO IN THE STORY, YOU KILL WHOEVER LOOKS INTO IT. WHY THE HELL WOULD I WANT TO HAVE IT AROUND?
AS MY PATRON, THINGS ARE DIFFERENT FOR YOU. WE CAN USE IT TO COMMUNICATE.
JUST DON'T LET ANYONE SEE IT IF YOU WANT THEM TO KEEP INTACT THEIR SANITY OR VITAL ORGANS.
SO I HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU SO YOU DON'T BARGE IN ON ME, AND PUTTING EVERYONE AROUND ME AT RISK BY HAVING THIS THING AROUND ME AT ALL TIMES?
SCRUMPTIOUS MORAL DILEMMA, ISN'T IT?
"SCRUMPTIOUS" ISN'T EXACTLY THE WORD I'D USE.
AT LEAST NOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE, RIGHT?
SORT OF LIKE HAVING A CHOICE BETWEEN WHICH EYE I'D LIKE TO HAVE SANDBLASTED.
I HAVE PERSONALLY WITNESSED THE EMPTINESS OF THE COSMOS AND THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF MAN, AND I AM TELLING YOU TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE. CONSIDER LISTENING.
HITTING BELOW THE BELT, ARE WE?
SPEAKING OF BELOW THE BELT, I LIKE THAT TATTOO ON YOUR –
RIGHT, HERE WE ARE. LIKE I SAID, IT'S NOT GOOD FOR ME TO TOUCH IT FOR LONG, SO I'LL BEELINE STRAIGHT DOWN AND BACK UP, AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER FOR ME ANYMORE.
PROVIDED, OF COURSE, YOU'RE NOT HIDING ON MY FUCKING SKIN AGAIN.
JUST JUMP IN THE FUCKING WATER, ALREADY!!!
SPLOOSH!!!


HOURS LATER...
WELL, BIG SURPRISE; I GUESS I HAVE TO GO IN AFTER HIM.
24-HOUR BATHYSPHERE RENTAL
Yes, we're serious!
RULES
YOU SAW ME IN MY UNDERWEAR IN THE FIRST TWO ISSUES. GET BENT.
AN UNDERWATER CITY! I CAN GUESS WHO THAT BELONGS TO... AND IF ANYONE'S HOME, THEY MUST BE WHAT'S HOLDING NYARLY UP... NOW, HOW DO I GET IN THERE?
WHOA!
SPLAT!

OKAY, SO NOW MY JAUNT THROUGH THE NTH DIMENSION IS NO LONGER THE MOST UNCOMFORTABLE EXPERIENCE I'VE HAD TODAY.
NOW TO FIND OUT HOW NYARLY GOT THROUGH IT.
SOME TIME LATER...
THIS PLACE IS NUTS! IT'S IMMENSE, EMPTY... THOUGH MAYBE I SHOULD BE GLAD ABOUT THAT, CONSIDERING THE FISHMEN AREN'T EXACTLY FRIENDS.
HAHAHA! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GOT HIM!
HMM?
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
THAT CAN ONLY BE THE SHINING TRAPEZOHEDRON. BUT WHY ALL THE LIGHT?
CONGRATULATIONS, GILMAN! YOU'VE SUCCEEDED WHERE GENERATIONS OF OUR FOREFATHERS HAVE FAILED!
HA! IF THE LAST ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE BLACK ONE IS ANY INDICATION, WE HAVEN'T BEEN SENDING OUR CREAM OF THE CROP OUT AFTER HIM!
THIS IS WHAT THE END RESULT LOOKS LIKE WHEN YOU DON'T SEND A WORTHLESS SPONGE LIKE DEVONIAN WAITE TO DO A REAL MAN'S JOB.
WELL SAID, GILMAN THE MARSH CLAN WILL REWARD YOU FOR THIS. MAYBE EVEN PANTHALASSA HERSELF, HEY?
YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT THIS WAS ABOUT? YOU HAVE TOO MUCH SURFACE IN YOU. I CARE NOTHING FOR TRITE LOVE AND AFFECTION.
I JUST MEANT A CHANCE TO MATE. WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT LOVE?


NEVERMIND. WE CAN'T TAKE HIM UP TONIGHT WITHOUT MORE OF THOSE LIGHT CHARGES CLARKE GAVE US. REMIND ME TO THANK THAT UGLY SURFACE-DWELLER.
DYNAMITE OR C4?
NEITHER; THIS ONE'S REAL. I HAD TO PROMISE SOMETHING BIG FOR THE HELP OF THE BLACK ONE'S ONLY SURVIVING FORMER PATRON.
SAY WHAT?!
YOU THREE TAKE THE FIRST WATCH. THE REST OF YOU, COME WITH ME; LET'S FIND SOMEPLACE TO BED DOWN IN THIS OLD DUMP.
THEY BEAT HIM. THEY DEFEATED NYARLATHOTEP.
THE ONE WHO SLEW THEIR FOREFATHERS, BEAT DOWN THEIR REIGNING KING, DAGON, AND ANNIHILATED SEVEAL HUNDRED VAMPIRES WITH MINIMAL HELP FROM ME.
WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
AND SO. THEY HAVE FOUND IT AT LAST.
WHO THE FUCK SAID THAT?!
I AM HERE. WOMAN. IN THE DARKNESS. WHERE NO GAZE TURNS.
WHO ARE YOU? I CAN BARELY SEE YOU IN THERE.
THAT IS BY DESIGN OF MY KINDRED; I AM TO BE FOREVER FAR FROM LIGHT. I AM TO BE FOREVER COLD.
WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING WITH YOUR VOICE, FUCKING STOP IT OR YOU'LL BE FOREVER ALONE, TOO. I GET CHILLS WHEN YOU SPEAK.
HUNDREDS OF GENERATIONS HAVE LIVED THEIR TIME SINCE I SAT BESIDE RA IN SHEDET. I AM WEAK. BUT STILL I AM SOBEK.
SOBEK? THE CROCODILE GOD OF ANCIENT EGYPT?
TRULY. YOU ARE NOT OF KEMET; YOUR SKIN IS PALE. AND YOU CALL MY LAND KEMET BY THE NAME THE HELLENES USE. AIGYPTOS. ARE YOU A HELLENE?
UH... YOU MEAN GREEK? NO, I'M AMERICAN. THINK LESS OLIVES AND WINE, MORE LITE BEER AND MELTED CHEESE.

I DO NOT KNOW THAT PLACE. YOUR LAND IS DISTANT. FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW ME.
I AM SOBEK. POINTED OF TEETH. SON OF NIT. WITH WATCHFUL FACE. WITH UPLIFTED BROW; RUSHING UP. COMING FROM THE LEG AND THE TAIL OF THE GREAT ONE. SHE WHO RESIDES IN THE BRILLIANT LIGHT.
SOBEK CAUSES THE GRASS TO BECOME GREEN ON THE TWO BANKS OF THE HORIZON. SOBEK BRINGS THE GREEN BRILLIANCE TO THE GREAT EYE WHICH RESIDES AMONG THE PASTURES. MY SEAT IS ON THE HORIZON.
...KAY.
SOBEK EATS WITH HIS MOUTH. SOBEK URINATES. SOBEK COPULATES WITH HIS PHALLUS. SOBEK IS THE LORD OF SEED. HE WHO TAKES WOMEN FROM THEIR HUSBANDS. WHEREVER SOBEK WANTS, ACCORDING TO THE DESIRES OF HIS HEART.
WHY DOES YOUR VOICE DO... THAT? I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST A GOD OF CROCODILES?
ONCE, MEN AND WOMEN FELT THROES OF AROUSAL IN MY PRESENCE. I MADE WOMEN RECEPTIVE AS THE SOIL OF THE NILE, AND MEN HOT WITH PASSION TO PLANT THEIR SEED THEREIN. I HAVE BEEN BANISHED BY MY BROTHERS, AND AM WEAK. BUT STILL I AM SOBEK. YOU HAVE FELT MY CALL.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE DOING THAT WITH JUST YOUR VOICE, BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME. I HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO FREE NYARLATHOTEP.
NYARLATHOTEP; HE IS APEP. THE DECEIVER. LORD OF CHAOS. ENEMY OF RA. IT IS BECAUSE OF HIM I AM PRISONER HERE. MAY HE LANGUISH FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS!
OH, GREAT, SOMEONE ELSE HE'S PISSED OFF. WHAT DID HE DO TO YOU?
I SEE YOU DO NOT KNOW OF HIS TREACHERY. I SHALL TELL YOU.

IN THE EAST, NYARLATHOTEP AIDED MARDUK IN SLAYING ABSU AND TIAMAT, PROGENITORS OF MY KIND. AFTER THIS, HE APPEARED IN KEMET TO OFFER HIS SERVICE TO KING PEPI NEFERKARE. HE KNEW THE KINGS OF KEMET LUSTED FOR POWER.

HE CALLED HIMSELF APEP, AND SAID HE WOULD PROTECT KEMET FROM THE COVETING OF OUTSIDERS, AND EVEN FROM THE TYRANNY OF GODS. SO KING PEPI HIRED APEP, AND HIS REIGN WAS ONE HUNDRED YEARS. SOON, THE BLACK ONE'S WICKEDNESS WAS TO BE DISPLAYED.

A HORRID SERPENT SOON APPEARED IN THE NILE. IT THREATENED TO DEVOUR THE SUN, WHO WAS RA, AND THE SOULS WHO SOUGHT FOR THE DUAT. WE GODS BATTLED IT, BUT ALWAYS IT RETURNED. IT FELL TO APEP TO DEFEAT THE SERPENT, AND HE SAID HE COULD DO IT ONLY BY NIGHT; THAT RA MUST ABANDON KEMET!

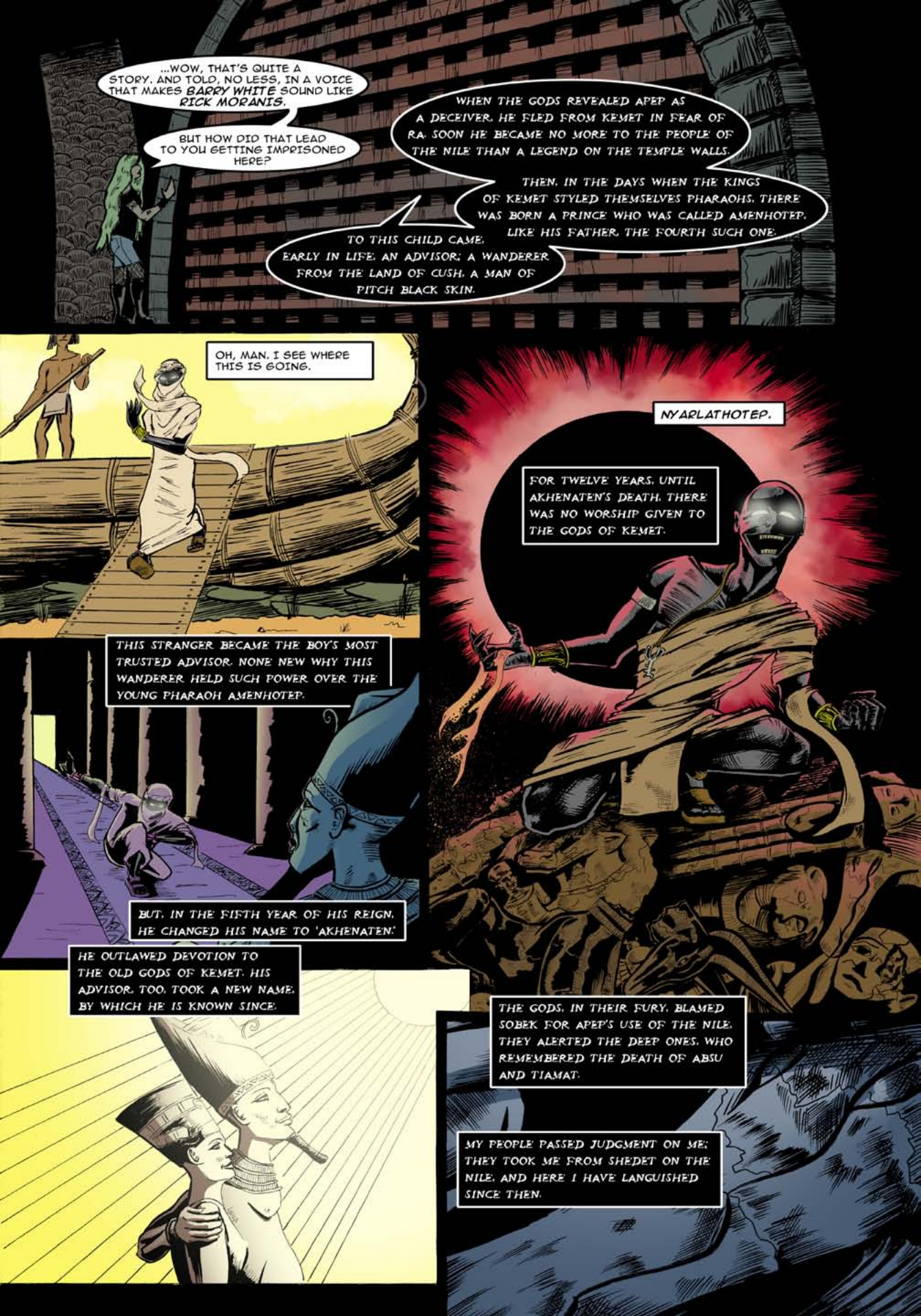
RA DEPARTED KEMET, BUT LEFT HORU, THE FALCON-HEADED, TO OBSERVE APEP'S ACTIONS. APEP HAD THE PEOPLE ERECT AN ALTAR OF FRIGHTFUL SHAPES AND ALIEN GLYPHS, DEDICATED TO STRANGE GODS. ALL THE WHILE, THE CROPS WITHERED FOR WANT OF RA. THE PEOPLE STARVED, AND FELL TO STEALING, AND MURDERING...

...AND EATING THEIR CHILDREN.
FINALLY, WE GODS TOLD APEP TO DESTROY THE SERPENT, OR BE DESTROYED HIMSELF. APEP SAID THE SERPENT HAD BEEN WEAKENED BY HIS OBLATIONS, AND WOULD COME UP FROM THE NILE AT HIS NEXT OFFERING. WHEN IT DID, WE COULD SLAY IT.

BUT APEP HAD LIED! WHEN THE SERPENT AROSE, HE FOUGHT WITH GREATER MIGHT AND FEROCITY THAN EVER. WE GODS MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE BEAST. BUT WE HAD HEEDED RA'S ORDERS, AND ALL WAS ACCORDING TO THE DESIGN OF RA.

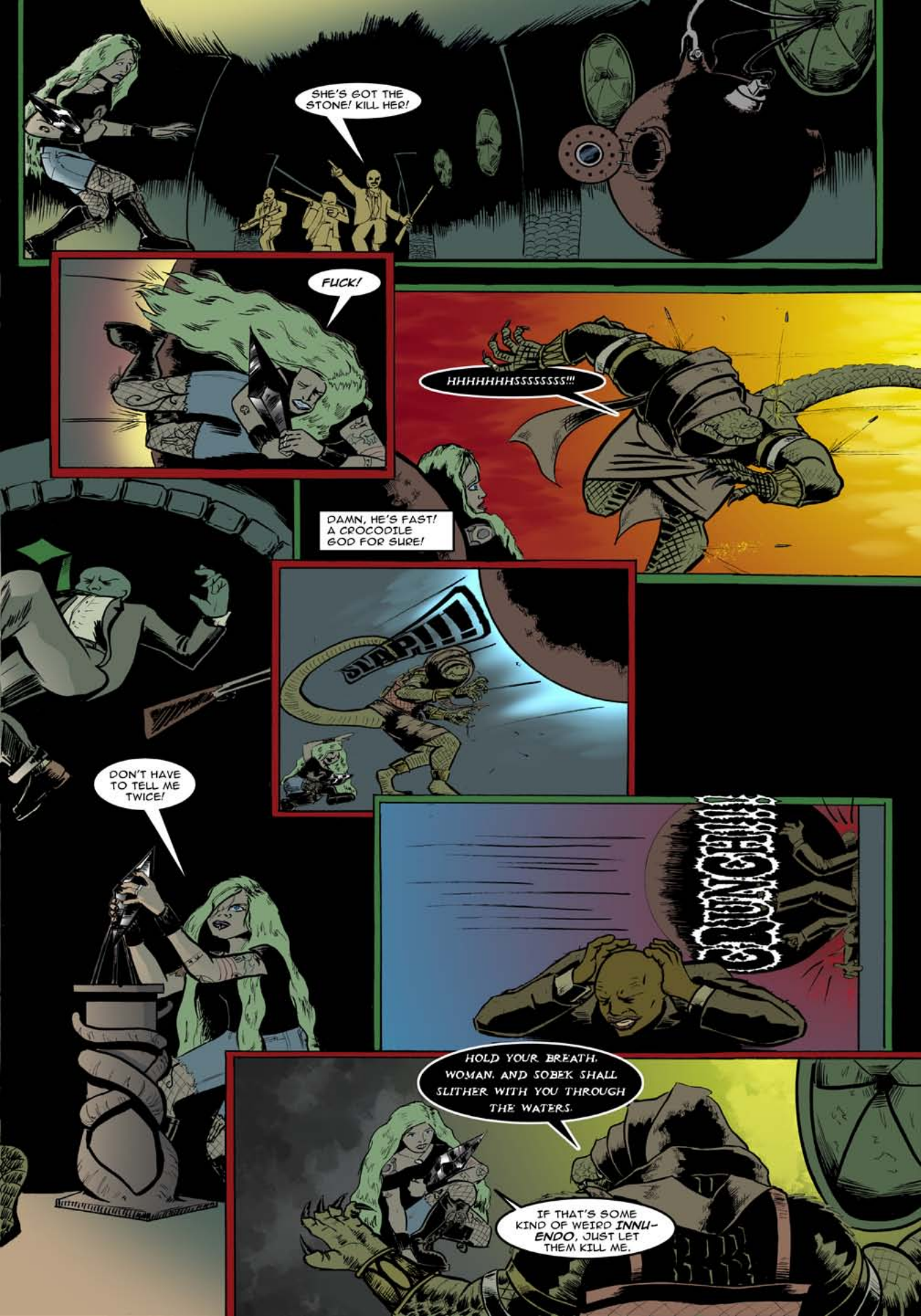
SOON, RA RETURNED FROM BEYOND THE HORIZON, AND WITH HIM HORU AND SET. TOGETHER THEY WITHERED THE SERPENT WITH THE LIGHT OF RA. TOGETHER THEY LEAPT INTO BATTLE, AND THEY IMPALED THE SERPENT UPON THE UNYIELDING SPEAR OF SET.

THEREUPON THE SERPENT CHANGED FORM, AND WE CAME TO KNOW THAT ALL THE TIME HE WAS BUT A MASK OF APEP. WITH TREACHERY HE HAD NEARLY DESTROYED KEMET. WITH TREACHERY HE HAD NEARLY SEVERED THE PEOPLE FROM RA.


...WOW, THAT'S QUITE A STORY. AND TOLD, NO LESS, IN A VOICE THAT MAKES BARRY WHITE SOUND LIKE RICK MORANIS.
BUT HOW DID THAT LEAD TO YOU GETTING IMPRISONED HERE?
WHEN THE GODS REVEALED APEP AS A DECEIVER, HE FLED FROM KEMET IN FEAR OF RA. SOON HE BECAME NO MORE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE NILE THAN A LEGEND ON THE TEMPLE WALLS.
THEN, IN THE DAYS WHEN THE KINGS OF KEMET STYLED THEMSELVES PHARAOHS, THERE WAS BORN A PRINCE WHO WAS CALLED AMENHOTEP. LIKE HIS FATHER, THE FOURTH SUCH ONE.
TO THIS CHILD CAME, EARLY IN LIFE, AN ADVISOR; A WANDERER FROM THE LAND OF CUSH, A MAN OF PITCH BLACK SKIN.
OH, MAN. I SEE WHERE THIS IS GOING.
THIS STRANGER BECAME THE BOY'S MOST TRUSTED ADVISOR. NONE NEW WHY THIS WANDERER HELD SUCH POWER OVER THE YOUNG PHARAOH AMENHOTEP.
BUT, IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF HIS REIGN, HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO 'AKHENATEN.'
HE OUTLAWED DEVOTION TO THE OLD GODS OF KEMET. HIS ADVISOR, TOO, TOOK A NEW NAME, BY WHICH HE IS KNOWN SINCE.
NYARLATHOTEP.
FOR TWELVE YEARS, UNTIL AKHENATEN'S DEATH, THERE WAS NO WORSHIP GIVEN TO THE GODS OF KEMET.
THE GODS, IN THEIR FURY, BLAMED SOBEK FOR APEP'S USE OF THE NILE. THEY ALERTED THE DEEP ONES, WHO REMEMBERED THE DEATH OF ABSU AND TIAMAT.
MY PEOPLE PASSED JUDGMENT ON ME; THEY TOOK ME FROM SHEDET ON THE NILE, AND HERE I HAVE LANGUISHED SINCE THEN.

...WORD. UM... I DON'T SUPPOSE THE DEEP ONES HAVE A TRIAL BY JURY OR ANYTHING, BUT, NOW THAT THEY HAVE NYARLATHOTEP, WOULD THEY LET YOU OUT?
TO THE DEEP ONES, HE IS BUT MY COMPANION IN TREACHERY. THE HUNT OF MILLENNIA IS OVER. THEY WILL CAUSE BOTH OF US TO LANGUISH INTO ETERNITY.
WELL...GIVEN THAT, WOULD YOU CONSIDER ACTUALLY BETRAYING THEM? IF IT MEANT YOU COULD ESCAPE?
...WOULD YOU HELP ME FREE NYARLATHOTEP?
I VOWED TO RA THAT IF EVER I SAW HIM AGAIN, I WOULD CONSUME HIM WITH FLAME AND BURY HIS ASHES IN THE DESERT.
...OKAY, THAT GIVES US ROOM TO GROW...
ALL I HAVE WANTED FOR MILLENNIA HAS BEEN THE BLACK ONE'S HEAD; TO BE FREE. I MUST FORESAKE THIS. I WILL REQUIRE MORE IN RECOMPENSE. WHAT ELSE CAN YOU OFFER SOBEK?
I DON'T KNOW, MAN. I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE. CAN WE GET A RAIN CHECK?
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
WE'LL OWE YOU A FAVOR; YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT IT IS NOW. THERE'LL BE A LOT TO ADJUST TO AFTER SO LONG DOWN HERE. FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO DO, AND WE'LL HELP YOU DO IT.
OH, AND NO CRAZY SUICIDE MISSIONS AS YOUR FAVOR. I, FOR ONE, WILL RENEG ON THAT PARTICULAR FUCKING BARGAIN.
AND HOW WILL I KNOW THAT THE TREACHEROUS BLACK ONE WILL HONOR THIS FAVOR? DO YOU HAVE SWAY OVER HIM?
WELL, YOU HEARD HER! CLEAN UP THE BATHROOM!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
BUT HE OWES ME, AND SO FAR IT SEEMS HE'S ACTUALLY TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR WHAT HE'S DONE. SO, YEAH; I'LL MAKE SURE HE KEEPS HIS WORD.
I MIGHT HAVE MORE SWAY THAN I THOUGHT. HE NEEDS ME FOR...SOMETHING. I'M NOT SURE WHAT YET.
THE BLACK ONE, IN THE DEBT OF SOBEK! I LIKE THIS VERY MUCH!
THE BARGAIN IS SEALED! THE PRISON DOORS ARE OPENED BY A SWITCH TWO DOORS LEFT OF HERE.
FREE ME, AND I SHALL SEE TO IT YOU RETURN SAFELY TO THE SURFACE, IN COMPANY OF THE BLACK ONE!

I THOUGHT GILMAN WOULD NEVER LEAVE! DID YOU SEE WHAT I POSTED ON FISHTAGRAM?
YOU GET WI-FI DOWN HERE?
CRACK!
CRUNCH!!!
SOBEK SLAYS HIS ENEMIES WITH VENGEANCE! SOBEK LAYS THEIR HEARTS IN THE FIRES OF RA!!!
WOMAN! ACQUIRE THE TRAPEZOHEDRON, AND QUIT THIS PLACE! SOBEK WILL FINISH THESE, AND TOGETHER WE WILL ATTAIN THE SURFACE!
WHAT THE HELL?!
CRRRACK!!!


SHE'S GOT THE STONE! KILL HER!
FUCK!
HHHHHHHHSSSSSSSS!!!
DAMN, HE'S FAST! A CROCODILE GOD FOR SURE!
SLAPIII
DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE!
CLANGGGGG
HOLD YOUR BREATH, WOMAN. AND SOBEK SHALL SLITHER WITH YOU THROUGH THE WATERS.
IF THAT'S SOME KIND OF WEIRD INNU-ENDO, JUST LET THEM KILL ME.

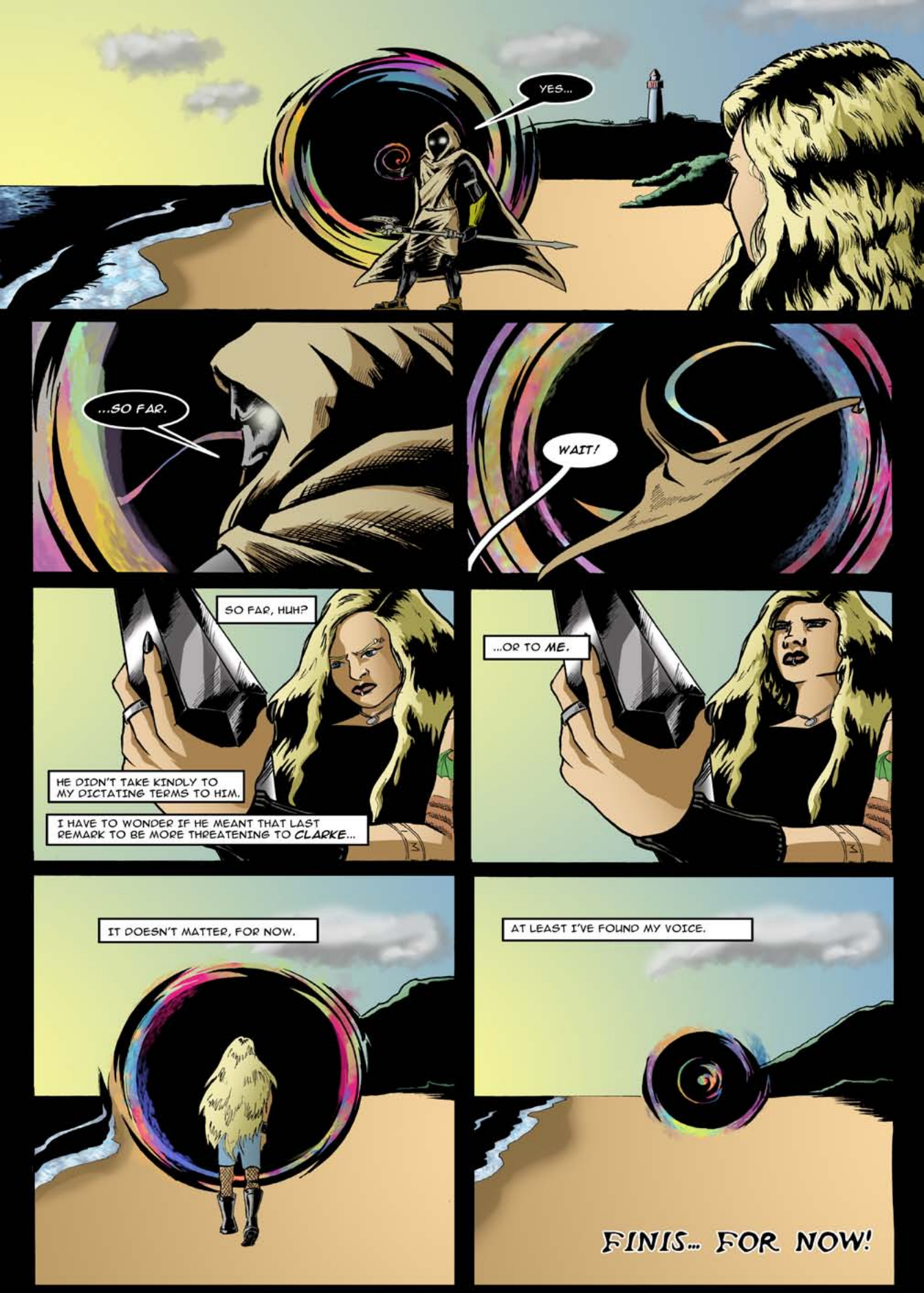
LATER...
THE SALT WATER DISGUSTS ME. BUT IT IS THE ONLY WAY BACK TO THE NILE.
IN GRATITUDE FOR HIS FREEDOM, YOU MAY COUNT SOBEK AS AN ALLY. BUT REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE, WOMAN. I WILL FIND CAUSE FOR YOU TO HONOR IT.

YEAH, YEAH, OMINOUS PORTENTS AND ALL THAT. I'M SURE THE BLACK ONE WILL BE THRILLED. HOW DO I GET HIM OUT, BY THE WAY?
LOOK INTO THE TRAPEZOHEDRON. SUMMON HIM. HE WILL COME.

RIGHT, I HAVEN'T HAD ENOUGH STRANGE SHIT HAPPEN TODAY.
NYARLATHOTEP, GET OUT HERE!

CRACKBOOM

WHOA...WHAT HAPPENED?
I PULLED YOUR ASS OUT OF THE FIRE FOR A CHANGE. THAT MEANS YOU OWE ME ONE.
AND HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THAT CONCLUSION? I'VE SAVED YOU TWICE.
THE SAVE FROM DAGON WAS LEGIT, BUT YOU TRICKED ME INTO THE STUPID VAMPIRE SITUATION. THAT COUNTS AGAINST YOU. AND, JUST EARLIER, YOU TRIED TO USE MY OWN FUCKING MUSIC TO TWIST MY ARM INTO FOLLOWING YOU.
I SAVED YOUR ASS THIS TIME, AND TO DO IT, I HAD TO MAKE A DEAL FOR BOTH OF US WITH SOMEONE THAT YOU WRONGED A LONG TIME AGO. AND YOU WILL HONOR IT WHEN THE TIME COMES. THAT'S WHAT YOU OWE ME FOR.
THIS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.
THEN THAT IS THE BALANCE OF THINGS. WHO AM I TO DISPUTE THE WILL OF MY LADY?
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO, THEN?
FOURTH-DIMENSION US BACK HOME. I'M GETTING SOME SLEEP, AND YOU'RE DOING WHATEVER THE HELL IT IS YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND. CLEAR?
AS A BLACK CRYSTAL.
SINCE YOU HAVE NOTHING FOR ME TO DO LONG-TERM, I NEED TO FIND SOMEONE. WHEN I DO, I WILL BE IN TOUCH, VIA THIS HANDLY LITTLE GEOMETRIC NIGHTMARE.
GREAT. WHO'S THIS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?
THE MAN WHO GAVE THE DEEP ONES THE MEANS TO IMPRISON ME.
...MY FORMER PATRON.
WHO STOLE SOMETHING FROM ME, CAUSING ME TO WANDER THE EARTH FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF CENTURIES, BEFORE BEING CAST FROM MY HOME, KADATH IN THE COLD WASTES.
I HEARD THE FISHMEN MENTION HIM. SOME GUY NAMED CLARKE?
SUPPOSEDLY THE ONLY ONE TO SURVIVE YOUR PATRONAGE WITH SANITY INTACT.

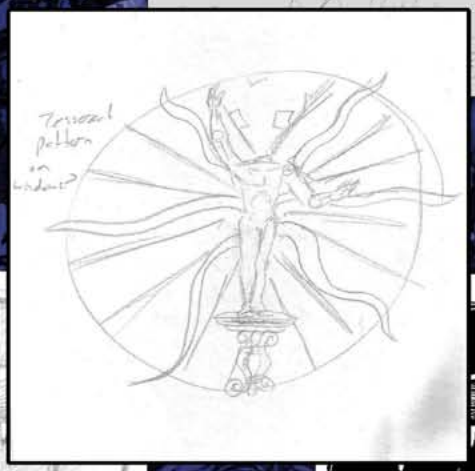

YES...
...SO FAR.
WAIT!
SO FAR, HUH?
HE DIDN'T TAKE KINDLY TO MY DICTATING TERMS TO HIM.
I HAVE TO WONDER IF HE MEANT THAT LAST REMARK TO BE MORE THREATENING TO CLARKE...
...OR TO ME.
IT DOESN'T MATTER, FOR NOW.
AT LEAST I'VE FOUND MY VOICE.
FINIS... FOR NOW!

CONCEPT SKETCH & PROCESS GALLERY

KADATH IN THE COLD WASTE

OPENING ISSUE #1 WITH A VIEW OF NYARLATHOTEP'S USURPED HOME WAS MORE OF AN ENDEAVOR THAN I HAD PREPARED FOR, GIVEN HOW LITTLE EXPERIENCE I HAD WITH ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING. AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THIS SKETCH, THE FIRST DESIGN I CAME UP WITH WAS A BIT TOO FESTIVE, ALTHOUGH I WISH I HAD KEPT ITS GREATER SENSE OF VASTNESS.

I AM NOT POSITIVE WHERE I GOT THE IDEA FOR THE HEADLESS STATUE AT THE WINDOW, BUT LOOKING AT IT NOW I THINK IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN UNCONSCIOUSLY INSPIRED BY THE DECAPITATED STATUE OF LIBERTY FROM THE MOVIE CLOVERFIELD. I REMEMBER OBSESSING OVER IT, BECAUSE I WANTED IT TO SUGGEST THE STORY OF KADATH AND ITS FALLEN FORMER INHABITANTS IN A SUBTLE WAY – IF YOU CALL DECAPITATION SUBTLE.

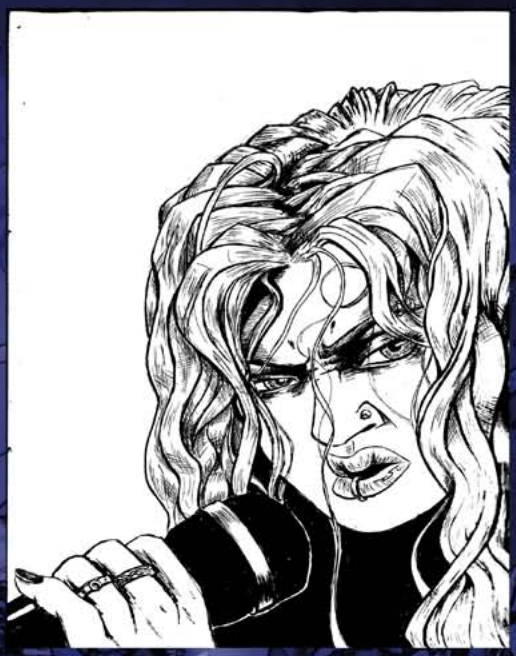


ABOVE: BREAKDOWN SKETCHES FOR ISSUE 1, PAGES 2 & 4.
BELOW: THE FIRST THREE PAGES OF ISSUE 1 IN THE PENCIL STAGE.

AZATHOTH'S EMISSARY

THE FIRST FEW CREATURES THAT APPEARED IN NYARLATHOTEP'S COURT IN KADATH ARE STILL SOME OF MY WEIRDEST CREATIONS EVER. AZATHOTH'S EMISSARY WAS A HODGEPODGE OF VARIOUS BEING-PARTS, WHILE NYARLATHOTEP'S COURT HERALD – THE BRAIN WITH THE OUTBACK HAT AND THE TRUMPET – WAS ORIGINALLY A CHARACTER I WANTED TO FEATURE MORE JUST FOR SHEER WEIRDNESS. SADLY THE LOSS OF HIS COURT, WHICH IS WHAT THE EMISSARY WAS SENT TO SUMMON HIM FOR, PREVENTED THIS FROM BEING PRACTICAL. I DECIDED HE WOULD BE NAMED "IAN MIND," BECAUSE I FIND ON-THE-NOSE NAMES LIKE THAT TO BE HILARIOUS.

BELOW: PHOTOGRAPH OF CRAWLING CHAOS #1 COVER IN PENCIL.



ABOVE: TWO EARLY DRAWINGS OF NYARLATHOTEP AND LUCY, THAT WERE USED AS BACK MATTER IN ISSUES 1 AND 2, RESPECTIVELY.

BELOW: A DEMONSTRATION OF HOW LONG SOME OF THE IDEAS FOR THIS BOOK EXISTED BEFORE THEY REACHED THE PRINTED PAGE. THIS WAS ONE OF THE EARLIEST CONCEPT SKETCHES FOR CRAWLING CHAOS, MAYBE THE FIRST ACTUALLY SHOWING NYARLY AND LUCY TOGETHER. DRAWN WELL BEFORE I STARTED ON ISSUE #1 AND OF COURSE YEARS BEFORE THIS SCENE WOULD BE FULLY FLESHED-OUT IN ISSUE #4.

RIGHT: COELECANTH(E) WAITE, EVEN IF IT LOOKS MORE LIKE DEVONIAN.

BELOW: CONCEPT SKETCH OF NODENS. HE WAS A TON OF FUN TO DRAW.

THE LOOK OF THE FISHMEN WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THEIR APPEARANCE IN THE VIDEO GAME "CALL OF CTHULHU: DARK CORNERS OF THE EARTH." POOR POSTURE, GREEN-SKINNED, THICK-LIPPED, WITH BUGGY EYES, VERY LITTLE HAIR AND RATTY OLD SUITS. THANKFULLY, MINE MANAGED TO DEVELOP A BIT MORE PERSONALITY THAN THOSE IN THAT ILL-FATED GAME. USING ALL OF MY SEA-CHARACTERS, I MANAGED TO SHOW JUST ABOUT THE WHOLE LIFESPAN OF A FISHMAN, AS I IMAGINED IT, AS HE TRANSFORMS INTO A DEEP ONE, AND THEN AS THE ELDER DEEP ONES ASCEND TO WHAT WE MIGHT CALL "GODHOOD." THE SIZE OF THE CHARACTER IS KEY TO THEIR PLACE IN BOTH THE LIFESPAN AND THE PECKING ORDER.

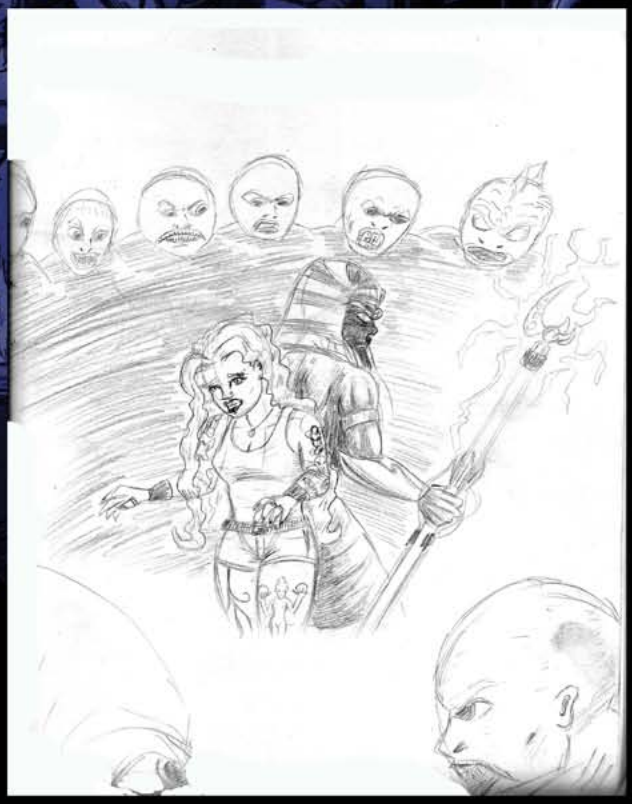
GILMAN WAS OLDER THAN THE WAITES, SO HE APPEARS TALLER AND HIS SUITS DON'T FIT AS WELL - CHECK OUT HIS SLEEVES IN ISSUE #3. THE DEEP ONES OFTEN APPEAR SHORTER AS THEY HUNCH OVER, BUT AGAIN IN ISSUE #3 THERE'S A PROFILE VIEW WHERE YOU CAN TELL THE SHROUDED CREATURE ACCOMPANYING GILMAN AND PANTHALASSA IS LARGER THAN BOTH. NODENS, AS THE ANCIENT CELTIC SEA-GOD, STANDS MUCH TALLER THAN NYARLATHOTEP, BUT THE ELDER EGYPTIAN SOBEK DWARFS NODENS. DAGON, AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP, IS COLOSSAL AND EITHER MATCHES OR AT LEAST APPROACHES THE SIZE OF THE RACE'S GREAT PROGENITORS, ABSU AND TIAMAT.

LEFT: CONCEPT SKETCH FOR ISSUE #2 COVER.

A LOT MORE IN-YOUR-FACE, BUT PROBABLY NOT AS INTERESTING FROM A COMPOSITION STANDPOINT AS THE DESIGN I SETTLED ON FOR THE COVER. A LITTLE MORE MESSING AROUND WITH IT MAY HAVE PRODUCED SOME GOOD RESULTS, BUT I GOT MOMENTUM WITH THE STANDING POSE AND JUST WENT WTH IT.

RIGHT: CONCEPT SKETCH FOR ISSUE #3 COVER

NOT MUCH CHANGED WITH THIS ONE, LEAST OF ALL THE RATHER PLAIN FISHMAN FACES. THEY WEREN'T QUITE THREATENING ENOUGH, SO I ADDED DAGON LOOMING IN THE BACKGROUND. I ALSO DIDN'T LIKE HOW SCARED LUCY LOOKED; IT WAS FINE FOR THE ACTUAL STORY, BUT UNLESS THE SELLING POINT IS THAT THEY'RE TOTALLY HELPLESS, YOU DEFINITELY WANT YOUR CHARACTERS TO LOOK LIKE BADASSES ON THE COVER.



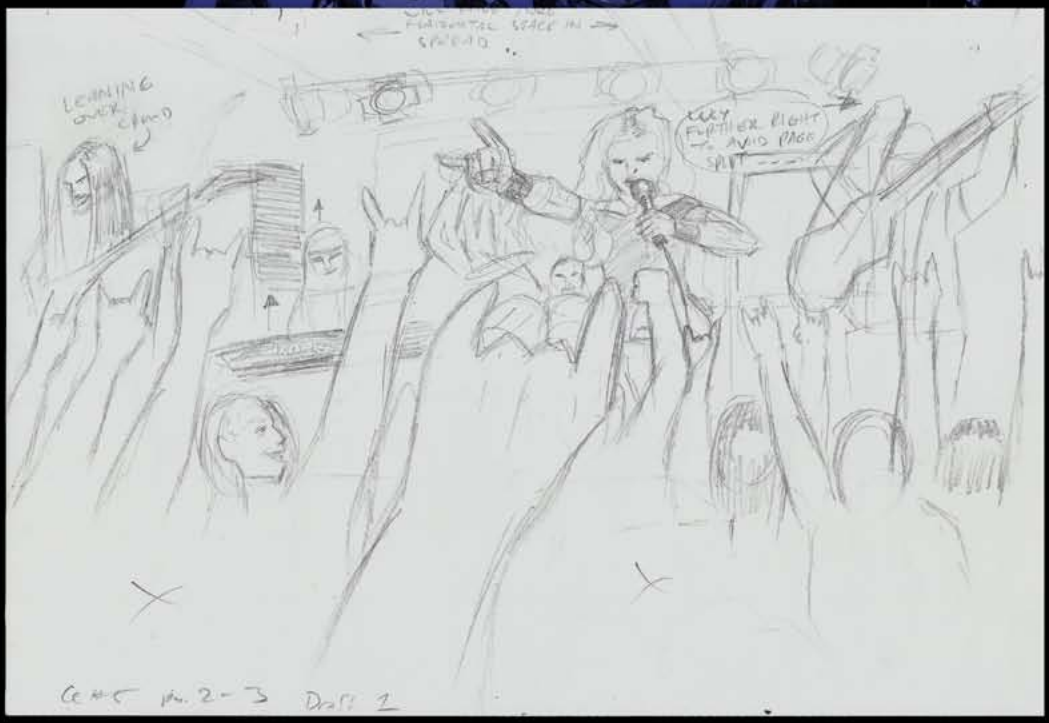
TWO EARLY CONCEPT SKETCHES FOR THE COVER OF ISSUE #5. THE DESIGN BELOW HAD TOO LITTLE GOING ON, AND THE DESIGN TO THE RIGHT HAD TOO MUCH – AND ALL HAPPENING IN THE FOREGROUND. I LIKED THE FLANKING CROCODILE MOTIFS, WHICH WERE PROBABLY INSPIRED BY NILE ALBUM ART, BUT THEY WERE JUST A BIT TOO DECORATIVE WHEN MY COVERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN REPRESENTATIVE. THEY ALSO REVEALED TOO MUCH ABOUT SOBEK, A CHARACTER I WANTED TO KEEP HIDDEN UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT. BUT, YOU CAN SEE THE PROCESS OF INCHING CLOSER TO A GOOD IDEA THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION. WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT, SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO START HAMMERING AWAY UNTIL YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU ***DON'T*** WANT, AND GO FROM THERE.

ISSUE #5 PROCESS.

LEFT: CONCEPT SKETCH
BELOW: PENCILS
BELOW LEFT: FINISHED COLORS

I WAS HAVING TROUBLE FIGURING OUT A DESIGN FOR ISSUE #5 THAT ENCOMPASSED EVERYTHING UNIQUE ABOUT THE STORY, BUT DIDN'T SPOIL THE REVEAL OF MY MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER, SOBEK. I WOUND UP FLIPPING THROUGH A BOOK ON IRON MAIDEN THAT SOME FRIENDS HAD BOUGHT ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY, AND THE SWEEPING, ENERGETIC AESTHETIC OF THE BAND'S ALBUM COVERS AND SET DESIGNS REALLY GOT THE GEARS TURNING. THIS ONE WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT COVER I'VE DONE TO DATE, BUT IT WAS WORTH THE EFFORT. I DID MY BEST, USING AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DICTIONARY I FOUND ONLINE, TO WRITE ACTUAL MESSAGES IN THE HEIROGLYPHICS, BUT I HAVE LONG SINCE LOST THE SHEET ON WHICH I WROTE OUT WHAT I WANTED TO SAY, AND I CAN'T REMEMBER ANY OF THEM. PRETTY SURE THE CARTOUCHE ON THE FAR LEFT HAS THE NAME "KASEY" IN IT, SO I'M SURE IT WAS SURROUNDED BY SOMETHING MUSHY.

RIGHT: LUCY'S CTHULHU DEATH'S-HEAD TATTOO
BELOW: EARLY DRAFT OF ISSUE #5, PAGE 2-3 SPREAD.



Nyarly's

"PANTHALASSA MARSH"

CC04 – Hipster Vampire... "Vampster?"
Unbelievable Chic
Sparkles – yes, really gen. of vamp
Vegan – refuses to drink human (or animal?) blood – accounts for sickness

MIETTE – REGIONAL VAMPIRE LEADER
VIP
Red hair

Find patterns for clothes that will offset scales
REMEMBER- CROCODILE'S WHITE ON UNDERSIDE
Scales less pronounced as they move down limb
STUDY: RIPPED LINEN

CHARACTER BIOS

NEITHER LOVECRAFTIAN LORE NOR HEAVY METAL BAND ROSTERS ARE KNOWN FOR BEING SIMPLE OR EASY TO REMEMBER (UNLESS YOU'RE SOME GATEKEEPING LOSER), SO HERE'S A BRIEF OUTLINE OF EACH CHARACTER AND THEIR PLACE IN THE CRAWLING CHAOS COSMOS.

CARLOS ATAULFO
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
CARLOS HAD A LONG, DIFFICULT ROAD TO SIT BEHIND THE DRUM KIT FOR OUKRANOS. GROWING UP IN THE SLUMS OF SAO PAULO, CARLOS LEARNED EVERYTHING HE KNEW ON WHATEVER BORROWED AND BATTERED EQUIPMENT HE COULD GET HOLD OF, AND BLASTED HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE BRAZILIAN DEATH METAL SCENE. FUELED BY THE RAGE OF POVERTY AND A SERIES OF SELF-DESTRUCTIVE FAMILY TRAGEDIES, CARLOS SENT HIS DEMO TAPES TO BANDS ALL OVER THE U.S., AND MADE THE MOVE AS SOON AS HE HAD A GIG. QUIET AND RESERVED, EVEN AMONG HIS BANDMATES, CARLOS KEEPS HIS EYES FIXED FORWARD, AND SPEAKS BEST WITH A PAIR OF STICKS.

AZATHOTH
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
THE PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF CHAOS, PRESENT AT ONCE IN ALL DIMENSIONS AND REALITIES AND YET ABSENT AS WELL – EVEN ITS VERY EXISTENCE IS NOT ABSOLUTE. IT HAS NO PERMANENT FORM, CONSTANTLY SHIFTING AND CHANGING, MORE LIKE A FORCE OF NATURE OR AN INTERSTELLAR FORMATION THAN A PERMANENT BEING. IT FATHERED NYARLATHOTEP AT THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS, AND HAS CONTINUED TO FUEL HIM WITH ITS CONSTANT, PASSIVE DEGRADATION OF ALL ORDERED SYSTEMS WITH WHICH IT COMES IN CONTACT. IT RESIDES AT THE 'CENTER OF ALL THINGS' (A TITLE BESTOWED BY HUMAN MINDS, WHO IMAGINE THE BEING TO BE OMNIPOTENT AND THUS, CENTRAL), SURROUNDED BY DEMONIC DEVOTEES WHO PLAY PIPES AND CHANT IN COMPLETELY ARRHYTHMIC, UNMUSICAL BURSTS. IT IS ALSO CALLED THE 'BLIND, IDIOT GOD,' POSSIBLY DUE TO ITS SEEMING CAPACITY TO PERCEIVE EVERYTHING AND YET RELUCTANCE (OR PERHAPS INABILITY) TO ENACT A PERCEIVABLE WILL OR PURSUE ANY KIND OF LONG-TERM AGENDA, AS FAR AS SENTIENTS CAN COMPREHEND.

DR. BOWEN
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
LUCY'S AMERICAN LITERATURE PROFESSOR. LESS CREEPY THAN PROFESSOR PHELPS, ALTHOUGH A LITTLE TOO FAMILIAR.

CASSANDRA CHAMBERS
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
LUCY'S BEST FRIEND SINCE THE SEVENTH GRADE, AND KEYBOARD PLAYER IN OUKRANOS. A VERSATILE MUSICIAN SINCE EARLY CHILDHOOD, CASSANDRA IS INDESPENSIBLE TO THE LOCAL MUSIC COMMUNITY AS AN ACCOMPLISHED MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST, AND HIDES A BIT OF A WILD STREAK UNDER HER RESERVED EXTERIOR. SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING LUCY INTO HEAVY METAL AND STICKING BY HER DURING HER DARKEST HOURS. AS SUCH, ANYONE CROSSING HER CAN EXPECT A FIERCE DEFENSE FROM HER CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

DAGON
FIRST APPEARANCE: #3
ANCIENT BABYLONIAN SEA-GOD, AND CURRENTLY THE SUPREME POWER OVER ALL DEEP ONES AND SEA-GODS. HE IS OF ENORMOUS STATURE, AND SUBSISTS ON GRISLY SACRIFICES PROVIDED BY HIS WORSHIPPERS AND OFFSPRING ALL AROUND THE WORLD. LIKE ALL SEA-BEINGS, HE NUTURES A BLOOD HATRED FOR NYARLATHOTEP FOR THE DEATHS OF HIS PROGENITORS, ABSU AND TIAMAT.

GILMAN
FIRST APPEARANCE: #3
MEMBER OF AN OLD INNSMOUTH FAMILY WHO TOOK THE THIRD OATH, AND WHO ACCOMPANIED PANTHALASSA TO THE MIDWEST. HE DETESTS THE WAITES, AND SEEMS TO BEAR SOME GRUDGE AGAINST DEVONIAN PARTICULARLY.

HIPSTER VAMPIRE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #4
A SKINNY-JEANS-WEARING, DRACST BLOOD RIBBON-SWILLING IPOD ADDICT WHO JUST SO HAPPENED TO GET BITTEN BY SOME EXTRAORDINARILY-DESPERATE VAMPIRE.

HORUS
FIRST APPEARANCE: #5
THE EGYPTIAN SKY-GOD, WORKING IN CONCERT WITH RA TO OPPOSE NYARLATHOTEP.

INANNA
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
SUMERIAN GODDESS OF WARFARE AND SEXUAL LOVE. KNOWN FOR HER QUICK TEMPER, IMMENSE WRATH AND A PROCLIVITY FOR NUDITY THAT GUARANTEES CRAWLING CHAOS WILL NEVER LAND A NEWBERY MEDAL. UNLIKE THE REST OF EARTH'S DIETIES, NYARLATHOTEP SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN QUITE A LIKING TO HER, THOUGH SHE FINDS HIM ABHORRENT.

LUCY LEFANU
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
VOCALIST AND LYRICIST FOR THE DEATH METAL BAND OUKRANOS, AS WELL AS A COLLEGE STUDENT STUDYING ENGLISH LITERATURE, LUCY'S LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A BIT OF A MESS, ALWAYS WITH TOO MUCH TO HANDLE AND NOT ENOUGH BOOZE TO COPE. LUCY GOT INTO HEAVY METAL DURING HER TROUBLED EARLY TEEN YEARS, THANKS TO HER BEST FRIEND CASSANDRA, AND QUICKLY BEGAN TEACHING HERSELF HOW TO PERFORM THE GUTTERAL, THROAT-SHREDDING VOCALS COMMON TO ITS EXTREME SCENES. WHEN AN EARLY BANDMATE TASKED HER WITH WRITING LYRICS, SHE SOUGHT OUT FOR INSPIRATION WORKS OF POETRY AND PROSE THAT BROUGHT THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF THE COSMOS TO BEAR ON A FRAIL HUMAN RACE – THE WEIRD FICTION OF WRITERS LIKE H. P. LOVECRAFT, ALGERNON BLACKWOOD, CLARK ASHTON SMITH AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES. IN LOVE WITH BOTH THE MUSIC AND THE LITERATURE (SHE TOOK THE STAGE NAME "LEFANU" FROM ANOTHER ADMIRED AUTHOR), LUCY'S HAVING A GO AT BOTH, IN TYPICAL OVERACHIEVING FASHION, AND CERTAINLY COULDN'T IMAGINE HANDLING YET ANOTHER ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY – SUCH AS AN ACCIDENTAL VISIT FROM A BEING SHE HAD ALWAYS IMAGINED A FANTASY.

MARDUK
FIRST APPEARANCE: #5
A HUMAN HERO AND KING OF BABYLON WHO ENLISTED NYARLATHOTEP'S HELP TO SLAY ABSU AND TIAMAT. THIS GREAT BATTLE WAS AT FIRST FAITHFULLY RECORDED IN THE EPIC ENUMA ELISH, BUT THE GLORY-HUNGRY MARDUK SMASHED TABLETS AND CHISELLED AWAY TEXT TO ERASE ALL MENTION OF NYARLATHOTEP (AS WELL AS HIS OWN STATE THROUGHOUT THE BATTLE OF COWERING IN A POOL OF HIS OWN LEAVINGS), LEAVING VAST LACUNAE IN THE EPIC TO THIS DAY.

PANTHALASSA MARSH
FIRST APPEARANCE: #3
UNLIKE THE DISGRACED WAITES, PANTHALASSA BELONGS TO THE PROMINENT MARSH FAMILY OF INNSMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS. THE MARSHES FIRST SUMMONED THE RACE OF AQUATIC DEEP ONES AND TOOK THE THIRD OATH OF DAGON, MEANING THAT THEY INTERBRED WITH THE DEEP ONES AND BEGAN THE RACE OF INNSMOUTH "FISHMEN." THEY GAINED IMMENSE WEALTH AND INFLUENCE AS A RESULT OF THEIR EARLY ACQUIESENCE. SHE ARRIVES IN THE MIDWEST TO OFFICIALLY WITNESS THE WAITE BROTHERS' ATTEMPTED REDEMPTION.

MIETTE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #4
LEADER OF THE CITY'S VAMPIRE COVEN. LIKE MOST VAMPIRES, HER FAVORITE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE DRINKING THE BLOOD OF THE LIVING, LOUNGING AROUND ON VICTORIAN FURNITURE IN IMPRACTICAL CLOTHING, AND JOCKEYING FOR SOCIAL STATUS WITH SNOOTY OUT-OF-TOWN VAMPIRES. WHEN NYARLATHOTEP RETURNS, INTENT ON CONTINUING HIS OLD HOBBY OF COLLECTING VAMPIRE FANGS, MIETTE SEES THE CHANCE TO TURN THE TABLES ON THEIR OLD ENEMY AND WIN THE RESPECT OF HER FELLOW BLOOD-DRINKERS IN ONE FELL SWOOP.

GUNNAR MULLER
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
THE RESIDENT GUITAR WIZARD FOR OUKRANOS, GUNNAR HONED HIS SKILLS IN THE LEGENDARY THRASH SCENE OF HIS NATIVE GERMANY, BUT HAD TROUBLE STANDING OUT AMIDST ALL THE OTHER SPEED-FREAK AXEMEN. FIGURING PROMINENCE MIGHT BE BETTER ACHIEVED IN NEWER, LESS-POPULOUS SCENES, GUNNAR CROSSED THE SEA TO TRY HIS LUCK IN AMERICA'S BURGEONING BLACK UNDERGROUND. HE NEVER FORGOT WHERE HE CAME FROM, HOWEVER; GUNNAR'S FAVORITE VIEW IS DOWN HIS OWN NOSE, EITHER AT HIS GUITAR STRINGS OR AT THE OPINIONS OF THE CHRONICALLY-LESS-METAL.

NODENS
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
ANCIENT CELTIC SEA GOD, KNOWN OTHERWISE AS NUADA OR NUDD. HE IS QUICK TO PICK A FIGHT AND CARRIES ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO HIS HEART THE MEMORY OF NYARLATHOTEP'S SLAYING OF ABSU AND TIAMAT, THE PROGENITORS OF ALL EARTH'S SEA GODS, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. HE CARRIES THE HORN OF NODENS, WHICH HE UNDOUBTEDLY NAMED, AND WHICH COMMANDS CONTROL OVER HIS FEARSOME ARMY OF FACELESS NIGHT-GAUNTS.

NYARLATHOTEP
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
THE MESSENGER AND SOUL OF THE OUTER GODS, SON OF AZATHOTH, BIRTHED IN THE DAWN OF THE UNIVERSE WHEN AZATHOTH COPULATED WITH THE DARKNESS. HE IS ALONE AMONG THE COSMIC ENTITIES IN HIS INSATIABLE INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF SENTIENTS, WHO MOSTLY GO UNNOTICED BY BEINGS OF HIS AGE AND POWER. THIS IS LIKELY DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE IS POWERED BY THE PROPOGATION OF CHAOS, THE BREAKDOWN OF ORDERED SYSTEMS LIKE THE KIND THAT SENTIENT BEINGS DEDICATE THEIR LIVES TO BUILD. HE IS CAPABLE OF SEEMINGLY LIMITLESS SHAPESHIFTING AND TRAVEL THROUGH HIGHER DIMENSIONS, AS WELL AS POSSESSED OF VAST KNOWLEGE OF TIME, PHYSICS, AND THE FAR REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE. HE DERIVES SADISTIC ENJOYMENT FROM TORMENTING SENTIENTS WITH GLIMPSES OF KNOWLEDGE THEY ARE NOT MENTALLY EQUIPPED TO PROCESS, INCLUDING THOSE ALIGNED TO HIM; HE OFTEN BOASTS THAT EVERY PATRON WHO ENLISTS HIS SERVICES DOES NOT SURVIVE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SANITY INTACT, IF AT ALL. DESPITE POSSESSING SUCH VAST COSMIC POWER, NYARLATHOTEP CAN BE TEMPORARILY VANQUISHED BY THE USE OF EXTREMELY BRIGHT LIGHT AND CONFINED WITHIN THE SHINING TRAPEZOHEDRON, A MYSTERIOUS ARTIFACT THAT WAS LAST SEEN ON EARTH WHEN IT WAS THROWN INTO THE SEA NEAR PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND BY WRITER ROBERT BLAKE ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HE DIED. HE USUALLY RESIDES AT KADATH IN THE COLD WASTE, AN ANCIENT PALACE ONCE OCCUPIED BY EARTH'S GODS – THE TRUE HEADS OF ALL ORDERED SOCIETIES – MOST OF WHOM HE HAS MANAGED TO DESTROY OR CONFINE OVER MANY THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

PROFESSOR PHELPS
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
LUCY'S ENGLISH LITERATURE PROFESSOR. A BIT OF A CREEP, WHO DOESN'T THINK TOO HIGHLY OF LUCY'S 'PREOCCUPATION' WITH DEATH METAL.

RA
FIRST APPEARANCE: #5
THE EGYPTIAN SUN-GOD, AN OPEN OPPONENT OF NYARLATHOTEP WHEN HE WAS IN EGYPT AND ONE OF THE FEW GODS WITH THE POWER TO VANQUISH HIM.

SATAN
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
THE ABRAHAMIC EPITOME OF EVIL, THE FALLEN ANGEL KNOWN ALSO AS LUCIFER, AND THE PRIMARY FIGURE OF INSPIRATION THROUGHOUT HEAVY METAL'S EARLY YEARS. ANY RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN SATAN AND FORMER SINGERS OF CANDLEMASS IS ENTIRELY COINCIDENTAL.

SET
FIRST APPEARANCE: #5
THE EGYPTIAN GOD OF DESERTS, STORMS, AND VIOLENCE. OFTEN OPPOSED TO HIS FELLOW DEITIES, ESPECIALLY HORUS, THE THREAT OF THE ICONOCLASTIC APEP IS ENOUGH TO BRING HIM INTO ALLIANCE WITH RA.

MIKE SKRDLA
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
OUKRANOS' BASS PLAYER AND CO-FOUNDER. MIKE IS A VETERAN OF MANY YEARS IN LOCAL METAL AND CRUST PUNK SCENES, PREFERRING A DIRECT AND DO-IT-YOURSELF APPROACH TO MUSIC, AND TO LIFE. AS SUCH, HE'S OFTEN AT A LOSS TO RELATE TO OR EXPLAIN ANY OF OUKRANOS' ESOTERIC LYRICAL SUBJECT MATTER, NOT BEING VERSED IN WEIRD FICTION HIMSELF, BUT HE'S SATISFIED TO HAVE FOUND IN LUCY AND HIS FELLOW BAND MEMBERS A WRITING PARTNERSHIP WITH A GROUP OF OTHERS WHO ARE JUST AS COMMITTED AND SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR ENDEAVOR AS HE IS.

SOBEK
FIRST APPEARANCE: #5
THE EGYPTIAN RIVER-GOD, PRESIDING OVER THE NILE, CROCODILES, AND FERTILITY. LIKE MOST OF HIS AQUATIC KIN, HE BEARS AN ANCIENT HATRED OF NYARLATHOTEP, ALTHOUGH HIS GRUDGE IS PARTICULARLY PERSONAL.

STEVE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
A NIGHT-GAUNT THAT RESPONDED ESPECIALLY FONDLY TO NYARLATHOTEP'S CALL AFTER HE OBTAINED THE HORN OF NODENS, AND WHO BECAME THE BLACK ONE'S FAVORITE STEED. NYARLATHOTEP CHRISTENED HIM "STEVE," FOR NO PARTICULAR REASON, AND USUALLY KEEPS HIM CLOSE BY, SOMETIMES DISGUISED IN THE FORM OF A LARGE BLACK DOG. WHEN IN NIGHT-GAUNT FORM, STEVE IS EASILY RECOGNIZEABLE BY HIS PET COLLAR AND CURVED HORNS.

COELECANTHE WAITE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
THE YOUNGER OF THE TWO WAITE BROTHERS. UNLIKE HIS OLDER BROTHER, DEVONIAN, COELECANTHE IS FASCINATED BY THE 'SURFACE CULTURE' OF HUMANKIND, INCLUDING HEAVY METAL MUSIC. THIS ENDURING FASCINATION, AS WELL AS A GENERALLY NON-HATEFUL DISPOSITION, HAVE EARNED COELECANTHE A LIFETIME OF BULLYING AND BERATEMENT, MOSTLY AT THE HANDS OF HIS BROTHER.

DEVONIAN WAITE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #2
THE ELDER OF THE TWO WAITE BROTHERS OF INNSMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS. GENERATIONS AGO, THE WAITES WERE A PROMINENT NEW ENGLAND FAMILY, UNTIL THE TAKEOVER OF INNSMOUTH BY THE OCEAN-DWELLING DEEP ONES. THE WAITES WERE AMONG THE LAST TO RESIST TAKING THE THIRD OATH OF DAGON, WHICH INVOLVED THE INTERBREEDING OF THE HUMAN POPULATION WITH THEIR NEW OVERLORDS, AND CONSEQUENTLY THEY SUFFERED A CONSIDERABLE DROP IN STATUS IN THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER. DEVONIAN, THE HEAD OF THOSE WAITES STILL LIVING ABOVE WATER, IS DETERMINED TO REGAIN THE FAMILY'S LOST PRESTIGE. WHEN WORD GETS OUT THAT THE DEEP ONES' SWORN ENEMY, NYARLATHOTEP, HAS A NEW AND VULNERABLE PATRON, HE SEES THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT.

WENDALL WHITE
FIRST APPEARANCE: #1
OWNER OF LUCY'S LOCAL OCCULT BOOKSTORE, WHITE BOOKS. USUALLY ALTERNATING BETWEEN STATES OF DRUNKENNESS AND HANGOVERNESS, HE OFTEN RECOGNIZES LUCY, AND BERATES HER FOR BEING IN A DEATH METAL BAND. DESPITE ARGUMENT BEING HIS USUAL LEVEL OF INTERACTION WITH CUSTOMERS, HE HAS SOMEHOW MANAGED TO REMAIN IN BUSINESS.

PROFILE: Oukranos, Lovecraftian death metal with a symphonic twist

BY RON MUSSELLS

Oukranos L-R: MIke Skrdla (bass, backing vocals), Carlos Ataulfo (drums), Gunnar Müller (guitars), Lucy LeFanu (vocals), Cassandra Chambers (keys, other instruments)

Oukranos, to those in the know, are frequently cited as America's answer to UK cosmic-black-metallers Bal-Sagoth - a comparison that makes lead vocalist and band founder, Lucy LeFanu, grin from ear to ear.

"We're such huge fans," she says, in a speaking voice surprisingly smooth and measured, given her usual live performance. "Me and Cass especially are complete nerds for those guys, we're the only two people on Earth that have read all the lore in the liner notes. Our band wouldn't exist without them."

^Hide Comments

Shpongled

Fucking awesome live band. Played them for my BJJ group and I thought they were going to murder each other!

Kvlt Wench

Can I just say this band is quite rad for having so much women's merch? Such a relief to not have to modify that shit. <3

Even with such an influence, the band has a history of teetering on the edge of existence. Their still-young career has suffered from frequent setbacks, including a revolving door of second guitarists, rickety support from labels who are financially unsound at best, and a niche sound and subject matter that doesn't lend itself particularly well to widespread appeal.

However, this fearsome Midwestern fivesome may just have what's necessary to claw their way out of obscurity. Despite the aforementioned trouble keeping guitarists, the band's core membership remains solid and dedicated. And having a unique sound certainly doesn't hurt, especially when it's in a style that hasn't yet been mined hollow.

Oukranos was formed under the moniker Gate of Deeper Slumber by LeFanu on vocals and bass, guitarist Alan Nigmie, and drummer Mike Skrdla, well-known in the local crust punk scene. The band released their first demo as a plodding, Lovecraftian death/doom project, but following a meeting with drummer Carlos Ataulfo, shifted their lineup and changed to a more intense and aggressive style. Ataulfo, a veteran of death and grind bands in his native Brazil, hit it off well with LeFanu and Skrdla, but wasn't too interested in the slow sound of the band. LeFanu remembers their interaction humorously.

"We loved Carlos right off the bat, but he gets anxious if he plays slowly for too long," she says, laughing. "When we first saw him play, it was with a local prog band, Rube Goldberg Device, and of course he killed it. We talked to him after the show and he said he was really looking to play something heavier. Mike took me aside, and said 'Are you really in love with playing bass? 'Cause I've always been a better bassist than drummer' [laughs]."

Seeking a sleeker name for their new, faster sound, the band changed their name to Oukranos, releasing a demo by the same name featuring LeFanu on vocals, Nigmie on guitar, Skrdla on bass and Carlos playing drums. Still more ambitious, the band swelled to a six-piece, recruiting keyboard player Ashton Smith and second guitarist Adam Roberts. A third demo - really a pseudo-album - called "Oblations to Hoary Nodens," followed soon.

^Hide Comments

karmic

just over here waiting for them to come to Sweden :'(

ct_thrash

Awww Swede <3 <3 <3

Here the difficulties began. After dissatisfaction with various small labels, the band decided to self-release their debut album, "The Gilded Spires of Thran." Frustrated with what he said was underappreciation of his classical training, Smith quit in the middle of the recording process, leaving the band to find someone to fill in. LeFanu called up her childhood friend, Cassandra Chambers, a gifted multi-instrumentalist, who, by the close of the sessions, had won over the rest of the band as a permanent replacement.

"Cass really saved our asses on 'Gilded Spires,'" LeFanu recalls. "She has a real way of coming to the rescue. She is so talented it's crazy; I think the only instrument I've never seen her play is a triangle [laughs]."

With this lineup in place, the band launched a regional tour in support of their new album. But, trouble still brewed; founding guitarist Alan Nigmie exited the band mid-tour, and the scramble was once again on for a replacement as Roberts did his best to handle all live guitar duties. In Chicago, the band caught the eye of German-born guitarist Gunnar Müller, who discovered they were looking for another axe and quickly set up an audition.

Gunnar Müller tearing it up live.

"Gunnar's dedication to his craft is pretty impressive," LeFanu says. "He just practices, all the time. He's not into drugs or partying, and I don't think he'd dare to look at a woman if his guitar was in the same room."

Müller came aboard, warmly welcomed by most, though by then Roberts bristled at having to share the guitar duties he had been performing alone. Just before writing began for the "Cries Rent the Aether" EP, Roberts left the band. After numerous further auditions, Monty Rhodes of power metallers Elfen Destiny joined Oukranos, and "Cries Rent the Aether" was released last year, gathering great reviews and a lot of distinction - including the distinction of being the final release by the foundering Injection Records. The label closed its doors only months after the EP dropped, and the band were left without support once more.

^Hide Comments

VickyH

are you ready now with bitching around?

Wolftribe

...you should drink more.

"That was such a drag for everybody. It was like, one step forward and two back, you know?" LeFanu says, with a shrug painfully familiar to anyone trying to gain a foothold on the long climb upward in the music business. "But, we had gone through so much other bullshit, we were beginning to get used to it. We figured that's just the way things go, and we've gotta be able to ride out the storm."

The storm intensified a short time later. While searching for a new label, the band began writing "The Profoundest Arcana," their second full-length album. Monty Rhodes, claiming that the band were "intentionally deaf" to his suggestions of a change in direction, became the second guitarist to leave in under a year, going back to his power metal roots in the band Dragonshart. In an earlier *MIOIG* story on Rhodes' departure, Gunnar Müller quipped that Rhodes had quit Oukranos “due to a critical shortage of puffy shirts."

Müller wound up, as Roberts had before him, handling all guitar duties during the writing and recording of "The Profoundest Arcana." Despite their previous preference for a twin-guitar attack, LeFanu states that Oukranos are not currently searching for another guitarist. Given their track record, that's hardly surprising.

"We gave a lot of the work of supporting leads on the album to Cass," LeFanu says. "She was all up for it, of course. It's given the songs a slightlier proggier feel, but they still sound dark as hell. We couldn't be more stoked to have everyone hear them."

And, after a long, uphill battle, through loss of members, loss of labels, and a whole lot of blood, sweat and tears, you can hear them this fall when "The Profoundest Arcana" is scheduled for release on Silent Hunger Records. Check out the album art and track list below!

^Hide Comments

Sentient 6

they are awesome, go download the entire catalogggggg. Also the singer is hot as fuck

dead6skin6mask

Are they going to open for you on the EoR headlining tour?

OUKRANOS - THE PROFOUNDEST ARCANA

TRACKLIST:

1. The Antediluvian World
2. Cries Rent the Aether
3. Deepening Tensions Will Not Be Resolved
4. A Terrifying Radiance
5. Bane of the Deep Ones
6. The Profoundest Arcana
7. Theragavverug
8. Laughing Into the Face of a God
9. Gloomy Premonitions of What Must Come to Pass

RON MUSSELLS is most likely a lazy anagram of some other name. He is the founder of METALISOKAYIGUESS and also the holder of a B.A. in Writing, neither of which he will ever live down. He has also contributed numerous articles to other metal sites, including METAL ERECTION and BLABBER-MOUF.NET. Despite FREQUENT inquiries throughout his grade school years and well into adult life, he is not closely related to the undersea mollusks that share his surname.

^Hide Comments

Dead_Lioness

Hey, I know them!

Brooks

I had the best fucking pasta on Earth for lunch today.

RUSSELL JACKSON IS A WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR FROM JEFFERSONVILLE, INDIANA. HE HAS BEEN MAKING COMICS SINCE HE ILLUSTRATED THE AVENTURES OF A SUPER-POWERED CROCODILE ON POST-IT NOTES AS A SMALL CHILD, WHICH HE THEN STAPLED TOGETHER. THE POST-IT NOTES, NOT THE SMALL CHILD. HE HAS NEVER STAPLED A CHILD. HE ***WAS*** THE CHILD. RUSSELL JACKSON DOES NOT APPROVE OF STAPLING CHILDREN.

ANYWHO, YOU CAN FIND HIS WORK ONLINE AT RUSSELLJACKSON.BIGCARTEL.COM, OR ON HIS FRANTICALLY-UPDATED INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT, @RUSSELLJACKSONART, WHERE YOU WILL NOT FIND ANY OF THE PICTURES OF HIM STAPLING CHILDREN. OR, YOU ***WOULDN'T*** FIND THEM, IF THEY EXISTED, BECAUSE THEY DON'T. AND EVEN IF HE ***HAD*** STAPLED ANY CHILDREN, THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU GO AROUND TELLING EVERYONE ABOUT, GOODNESS NO. THIS HAS GONE ON A BIT LONG, HASN'T IT? PITY ABOUT THAT STAPLING BUSINESS.

JUST TO BE EXTRA-SENSITIVE TO THE PAST TRAUMA OF CHILDHOOD STAPLING VICTIMS THE WORLD OVER, THIS BOOK WILL NOT USE ANY STAPLES IN THE PRINTING. NOR WILL I PURCHASE ANY MAILING SUPPLIES AT STAPLES, EVEN IF THEY HAVE THE BEST PRICES IN TOWN FOR THAT SORT OF THING. FLEXIBLE HOURS, TOO. STAPLES HAS NOT ENDORSED THIS BOOK IN ANY WAY.

RUSSELL LIVES WITH HIS WIFE, KASEY, WHO AS YOU CAN PROBABLY GLEAN WAS SUITABLY IMPRESSED BY THE HONEYMOON DESCRIBED IN THE INTRODUCTION. IF YOU HADN'T READ IT YET, HEY, SORRY FOR THE SPOILERS, BUT, I DIDN'T MAKE YOU FLIP TO THE END. THEY ALSO HAVE A DOG, WHO DID MOST OF THE TYPING FOR THIS VOLUME. HE IS A GOOD BOY AND DESERVES ***EIGHT BILLION TREATS.*** PLEASE PLAY TUG-OF-WAR WITH HIM.

DEATH MEAL VOCALIST LUCY LEFANU HAS A PROBLEM: WRITE THE LAST TWO SONGS FOR HER BAND'S NEW ALBUM. SHE TURNS TO HER USUAL SOURCES OF INSPIRATION: BOOZE AND OCCULT MAGIC, AND AWAKENS THE NEXT MORNING TO FIND THAT HER SEARCH HAD PRODUCED MORE AUTHENTIC RESULTS THAN SHE HAD ANTICIPATED: SHE IS NOW LOCKED INTO A CONTRACT WITH NYARLATHOTEP, THE CRAWLING CHAOS, TO SPREAD DISORDER ACROSS THE EARTH! IN THEIR ENDEAVORS, THE PAIR WILL CONTEND WITH EVERYTHING FROM SPARKLING VAMPIRES, TO SOCIAL MEDIA-ADDICTED FISHMEN, TO TEUTONIC GUITAR SNOBS. BUT LUCY'S GREATEST TASK WILL BE SURVIVING NYARLATHOTEP HIMSELF, NONE OF WHOSE PREVIOUS PATRONS HAVE OUTLIVED THE PARTNERSHIP WITH SANITY INTACT – IF AT ALL.

FROM WRITER/ILLUSTRATOR RUSSELL JACKSON, CRAWLING CHAOS IS EQUAL PARTS SEND-UP AND TRIBUTE TO BOTH THE WORKS OF H. P. LOVECRAFT AND HEAVY METAL MUSIC, AND WILL APPEAL TO FANS OF BOTH.

CRAWLING CHAOS, VOLUME ONE COLLECTS CRAWLING CHAOS #1 – 5, AND INCLUDES A VAST ARRAY OF BONUS FEATURES INCLUDING CONCEPT/PROCESS GALLERY, CHARACTER BIOS, A FEATURETTE ON LUCY'S BAND OUKRANOS, AND MORE!